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B
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L.Swinton
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T.Burrows
H.Dring
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M.Bellamy
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Allotments (The Old Parish Field)
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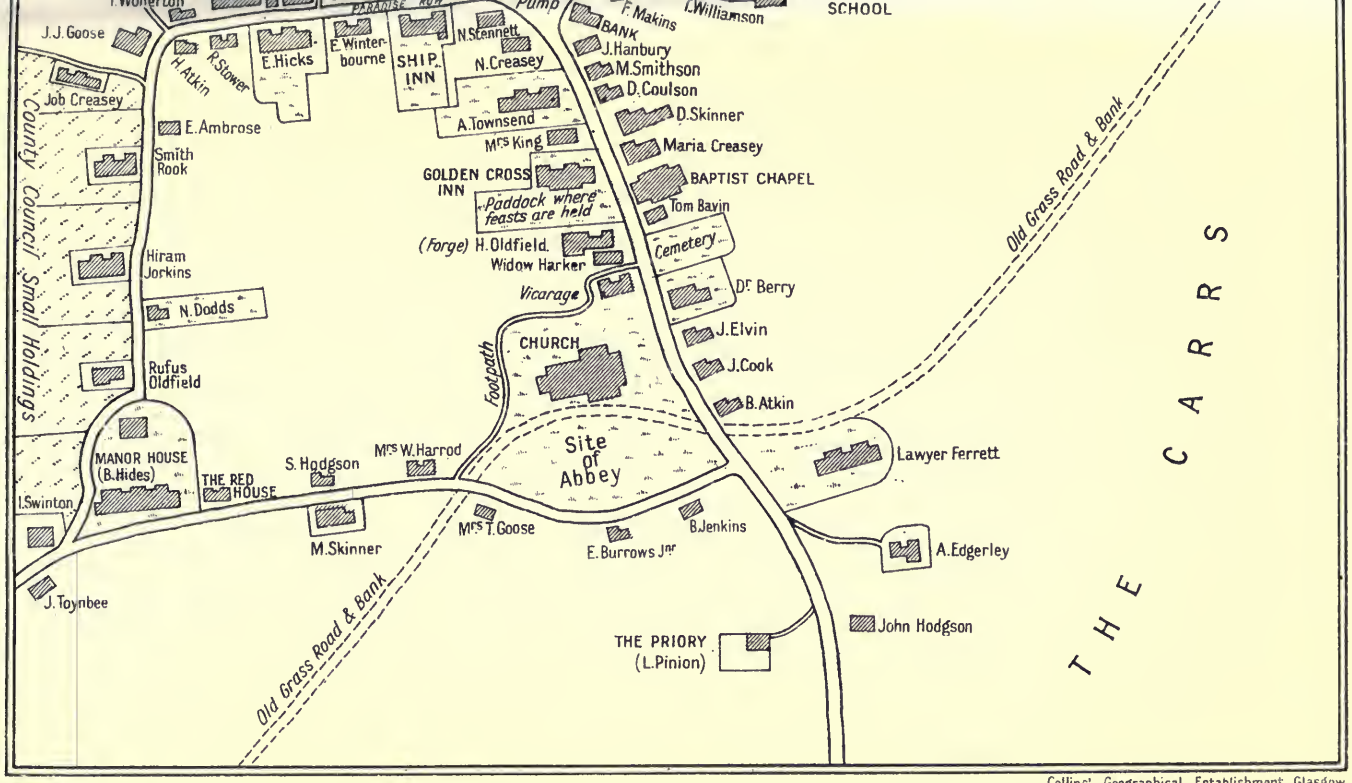

Collins' Geographical Establishment, Glasgow.

OLD ENGLAND

A GOD'S-EYE VIEW OF A VILLAGE

by

BERNARD GILBERT

With Two Maps

LONDON: 48 PALL MALL
W. COLLINS SONS & CO. LTD.
GLASGOW MELBOURNE AUCKLAND

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Fletton is essentially a type, its people are to be found in every village, and the author has taken the utmost pains to avoid giving the offence to his many rural friends which might arise from a work of this nature.

There is a hamlet of Fletton but he has never set foot in it; there was an Earldom of Coote but it is extinct; the use of common names and characters may lend colour to suspicion among folk unaccustomed to being closely mirrored; but the author has not anywhere portrayed a living person. He was born and bred in the country, nearly all his life has been spent there, and he knows many villages intimately; but he has avoided the use of actual persons, and if any farmers, labourers, post-masters, or schoolmasters fancy themselves represented, he can only say that ten thousand others will be in the same position.

During the serial appearance of portions of this work the author received letters from places as far apart as Cumberland, Bucks, and Devon, from people who declared that he must have been in their village. Each one of the several hundred souls depicted can doubtless be found corresponding in name, position, and temperament in some place, but these must rest assured that they have not been personally put down as typical of Old England.

1001664

PREFACE

My dear Orage,—When I first discussed with you my idea of presenting an English village as a whole, I little guessed that it would lead me on to such an immense task.

Balzac made an heroic attempt to depict the nation of his day. Despite his giant industry he needed ten lives to achieve his intention, and in these so much more complex days the attempt would be hopeless. It is possible, however, to portray the unit with which I have dealt and to show therein the factors and problems of the land which are basic in rural England.

To do this I had to freeze my unit and exhibit it motionless. To show it in action would take as many novels as there are characters.

The village is our largest social unit, being a society in which every person knows everything about every one, and in which the whole of the members are in personal relation. Our next unit is the small market-town of some 4000 inhabitants, in the least of which are a number of distinct circles; but the village, running up to 1000 souls, is a self-contained cosmos, a large family, and has no *beyond*. Its soul is coherent and complete.

I have taken such a village at one moment during the war and endeavoured to give a camera-obscura presentment of the multitudinous intrigues, ambitions, desires, disputes, interests, and all the social, political, financial, sexual and religious factors which thread the fabric so closely.

My inspiration was drawn from the writers who

have influenced me most: Bunyan, Defoe, and Landor. If Bunyan had been so minded we should now have a picture of the village of Elstow beyond price. Landor could have done it wonderfully; his *Conversations* are almost entirely static; and although he became dynamic when he spread his wings, his general inclination is toward static presentment.

When I came face to face with my problem I searched for predecessors. Hardy's *Dynasts* takes an epoch as its unit and is essentially dramatic; Crabbe's *Borough*, though covering to some extent a rural scene, was not what I was seeking for, and gave me no help. The *Spoon River Anthology*, though a strong and immensely striking work, is only a series of detached epitaphs, and Masters made no attempt to present a community.

As there are no prior examples of the static form discoverable, I had to deal with the technical problems as they arose. The characters explain themselves and throw light on each other; and all of them together set forth their village as an entity.

In my youth I was taught that there was an omniscient Being to whom everything was present at each instant, and it was this state of complete comprehension with which I wished to endow the reader. Such a state supposes a knowledge of each character and each relationship and a simultaneous view of every one of a vast complexity of interweaving strands.

There is no hero or heroine; no one character is more important than another; nor is there any villain. It is the ancient democracy of the Feudal System, the one which has stayed longest in our history and which has its roots deeper and more firmly in the soil of Old England than town-dwellers can guess or know.

BERNARD GILBERT.

Manor House Hospital,
Hampstead, 1921.

EXTRACT FROM COUNTY DIRECTORY (1914)

Fletton (not to be confused with Fletton, Hunts) is a parish and village on the road from Bly to Barkston, eight miles south-west of Bly (the nearest railway station) in the Western Division of the County. . . . The Church of St Nicholas, partially rebuilt in 1882, when the spire was destroyed in a great storm, is a structure of flint and rubble, with stone facings in the Early Pointed Style of the thirteenth century. . . . There are five partially stained windows in the chancel, which retains its piscina and sedilia; in the south aisle is the rood loft staircase. . . . The register dates from the year 1583, but is in a very confused state. The living is a vicarage, net yearly rental £299, with residence, in the gift of the Earl of Fletton, and held since 1898 by the Rev. Osmond Roderick Lorne, M.A., of Keble College, Oxford. Here is a Primitive Methodist chapel, erected in 1861, a Calvinistic-Baptist chapel, erected in 1866, and a Wesleyan-Methodist chapel, erected in 1868. The Earl of Fletton is lord of the manor, and sole landowner with the exception of a freehold farm—the Grange—of 208 acres, the property of Davis Mogg, Esquire. The 'Towers,' one of the seats of the Fletton family, was built by Aubrey Llewellyn, first Earl, A.D. 1664. . . . The Great Park was ploughed up by the ninth Earl (noted for his treatise on Husbandry); the grounds and gardens amounting now only to 84 acres. . . . The area of the parish is 9804 acres.

EXTRACT FROM COUNTY DIRECTORY

Sexton—Hucklebury Oldfield.

Post, M.O., and T. Office—Newton Ambrose, sub-postmaster.

Police Station—Joseph Daniels, Inspector; and one constable.

SCHOOLS.—*Church (Mixed)*—Hamilton Dring, master.
Council—Girls and Infants—Miss M. Harker, mistress.

Carriers to Bly—J. Sharples and J. Thomson (Tuesday—Stock Market; Saturday—Corn Market).

PRIVATE RESIDENTS.

Fletton, Earl of, The Towers, and Carlton, Bath, and Athenæum Clubs.
Kyme, The Hon. Eustace, The Dower House.
Berry, Josephus, L.S.A., M.R.C.S.
Burrows, Esau.
Ferrett, Phineas.
Hanbury, James.
Hicks, Enderby, M.R.C.V.S.
Key, Mrs William.
Lorne, Rev. O. R., M.A.
Lowe, Amelia.
Lowe, Jeremiah.

INNS—Full Licences.

Golden Cross—J. Harvey.
Coach and Horses—J. Ruston.
Mill Inn—L. Stower.
Ship Inn—H. Wells.

Off-Licences.

Joe Barks, Jeff Sharples, D. Coulson, Fred Makins, Seth Jordan, Smith Rook, Jas. Toulson.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR.—S. Dane.

EXTRACT FROM COUNTY DIRECTORY

District Councillors—S. Dane and P. Todd.

Parish Council.—*Chairman*—T. Rowett. *Clerk*—H. Oldfield. *Members*—J. Challands, I. Creasey, F. Dobney, L. Fletcher, D. Mogg, T. Stower, J. Toulson, A. Woods, H. Woolerton.

Manual Fire Engine.—*Captain*—H. Wells.

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I—The Earl

I am monarch of all I survey,
Or very nearly;
From Fletton Towers' topmost turret
Your eye may roam
Over the fairest stretch of England;
Farm after farm, field after field,
Rolling and swelling toward the horizon:
All mine!
The tenantry and tradesmen touch their hats
And raise no murmur at the slight damage
Said to be caused by game
(Allowed for in the rent):
My grandfather nine times removed,
Whose name I bear, and not I hope unworthily,
Geoffrey Llewellyn Aubrey Warrington Coote,
Was lord and master of these lands,
With feudal rights and powers,
Long ere the Guelphs came up from Hanover.
I have preserved those rights religiously,
And hope to pass them on untouched
To my dear son—my eldest—
Who will uphold the family of Coote,
Which, like an ancient oak,
With roots below the surface deeply spread,
Stretches its arms in majesty as far as eye can see.
There is, alas! one drawback to my happiness:
Just where yon coppice runs,
I deeply mourn to say,
One Mogg, a low-lived Welshman,
By some mean knavery secured the freehold,
Leaving it to his son;
And though *all means* have been attempted

By Ferrett, my trusty lawyer,
He will not yield, the stubborn brute;
And owing to the sham humanitarianism
Which blights the present century,
I cannot exercise my undoubted privileges to remove him;
It spoils my peace;
My son, my clever boy, must get it;
Then I shall rest in peace beside eleven forefathers.

2.—Saddler (Seth) Jordan

I don't want no better world than this,
Spite of what parsons say,
Beer's good, and tobacco, and there's good things to eat;
Ducks, geese, turkeys, chickens, and game;
Between bacon and ham I never could choose,
Coz I never got tired of either.
What's better than leaning over a pigsty,
Scratching the fattest
And counting the days to Christmas ?
It makes you feel holier inside than any church.
There's coursing, hunting, ferreting, skating,
Shooting pheasants, wood-pigeons, and rooks,
After the wild-fowl across Washover Marshes in winter,
And sweetest, mebbe, of all, a bit of poaching.
I wouldn't swap with nobody—
Not with our long-nosed Earl
What daren't bend for fear of breaking,
Nor Parson who mayn't squint at a woman for fear of his skinny wife,
Nor Townsend with his great business,
Nor Smithson with his thousand pigs,
Nor whey-faced Woolerton, nor that old Ferrett
What cannot bite nor sup like honest mortal,

But lives on pap for fear of belly-ache:
They might as well be dead!
Only one thing I've missed:
A bit of land;
I could have done with fifty acres to this saddler's shop;
Then I should have wanted nothing.
But land's harder to come by in Fletton than a virgin:
You can't have everything.

3.—Mrs Osmond Lorne

My dearest husband, my Osmond,
Vicar of Fletton, beloved of the parishioners,
Lacks one thing only:
He is not strong enough against the wicked.
Although I urge him to evict that dreadful Bavin,
He still refuses to bring lawful pressure.
For many years outside our door
The woman has lived with him,
Insulting me when I approached her
To suggest their legalising the union,
And close this terrible scandal.
When I pass her door with jellies
I see her horrid face
Jeering at me because I have no children—
But no, that is not Christian!
I must not own it even to myself;
My anger is on moral grounds alone.
Osmond refuses to press the agent
To evict the wretch who poisons all my life.
I have reasoned with Osmond until I am desperate,
And I cannot use compulsion, as some wives do,
For reasons I may not enter into here.
Although of course he is entirely faithful,
I've noticed him looking at the housemaid:
Amy shall go to-morrow.

4.—'Young' Butler Atkin

When the war broke out
The Earl spoke by the Village Pump
And said as we were threatened by the Kaiser
To work without wages, weekdays and Sundays,
And German foremen with whips to keep us going
If us single fellows didn't 'list.
So I left my sweetheart—my little Minnie Harker. . . .
[There's a plane!]
The war wasn't all it was said to be,
The ground not properly drained,
Tiny fields with onions growing in every gateway;
The folks was measly and undersized
And couldn't talk plain English,
Otherwise it was much the same as here;
And now I'm back without an arm:
Only—what did we go for ?
Our captain at Wipers said us heroes should have land,
But I can't even get an allotment,
'Cos Billy Bean has father's—
The one next to the ruined Tower—
On account of a few old thistles and a trifle of back rent.
Why can't the Earl give a field
To make more plots like they have at Hordle;
I guess the Germans would have took his land
If we hadn't pushed at Wipers.
The Agent pokes his nose up in the air
And says the County Council in good time may do
    something.
Now, I ask you !
They're all the biggest farmers—
Will they give up their land to the likes of us ?
They'd sooner dig trenches around their farms
And die in 'em.
If I'd a known as Billy Bean would do such a trick
I wouldn't a gone.

5.—'Gentleman' Pinion

Our Agent is a gentleman, thank goodness,
But things were sadly wrong;
I own it freely now, on looking back:
How could they help it at the ruling prices,
And a position like mine to maintain?
I hadn't a fortune to start with, like Edgerley,
Who is really too absurd!
Only creatures like Stower
Who stoop to any dishonourable trick,
Or the awful Hides
With his raucous voice and leather neck,
Who bullies every one and beats down the tradespeople
to the last halfpenny,
Could hope to prosper.
I can't stoop to their level,
Unworthy of a gentleman farmer and a Pinion.
But the war saved me,
I am better off than ever,
And if it only keeps on for a reasonable time
I shall be in quite a strong position.
I own there was one moment when things looked
awkward,
But they decided (as they were bound to)
That farmers couldn't possibly be taken to fight along-
side their labourers.
I lent my motor to the Military
At barely what it cost,
And sold them my hay and straw without a murmur:
The cheque from the Government has paid Townsend's
seed and manure account
Which was keeping me awake at nights.
The Prime Minister says our fields are our trenches,
And that we farmers can win the war;
Everything, he says, depends on us,

And we shall do our best
As long as they don't fix prices too low.
I wish father could have lived until now;
He talked so much about how Free Trade ruined farmers
And said 'A time would come! ':
It really does seem satisfactory to be patriotic and make
money at the same time;
Yet there are some who say we ought to be fighting.
What would become of my farm if I went ?
I've a good foreman on the Priory
But he needs the eye of a master.

6.—Davis Mogg

These tenant farmers are a sneaking crew,
Crawling on their faces before the Agent
And shouting for the Tory candidate,
Ready to lick anybody's boots.
I—Davis Mogg—
Stand on my feet a true-born Briton
To meet the banded powers of tyranny
Who plot and strive to rob me of my land.
They have all tried their hardest,
From Ferrett, that thieving lawyer, to the parson;
Offering me another farm in exchange
Outside their ' holy ' ground,
Or the next tenancy of their richest holding
On one of their other Estates;
As if I should !
Failing that, the sneaks have done their worst
With lawsuits and threats, tempting away my labour,
Over-running me with game, and such-like tricks.
I've bested them all.
What makes 'em maddest,
I keep the chapel up, that father built;
On Sunday mornings,
Led by old Winterbourne the tenor,

We march around the village singing hymns:
Old-fashioned tunes that make the heart rejoice.
Yet there are always drawbacks somewhere:
That Parish Field, the richest hereabout,
Goes with my farm by rights—
What business have Parish Councils to own land ?
Allotments are the root of evil,
Taking labourers from their work.
Now if I had that twenty acres, 'twould just round off the Grange.
A year ago the Parish Council couldn't get their rents,
Whilst thistles were the only crop in sight,
And they were nearly in a mind to let me have it,
When Billy Bean rushed in and took three plots:
Why don't he stick to bricks and mortar ?
I wish he'd tumble off a roof—
Not to kill himself—
But just enough to learn him better,
And keep him off the land
What belongs by rights to me.

. . . . .

Is that Mr Bennington coming down the Back Lane ?
No! as I live, it's Bob Cutts!

. . . . .

They manage things better in my native place:
Cutts wouldn't be *allowed* to interfere in Llantyfechan.
I had the Primitives, Stower the Wesleyans, and Ike Creasey most of the Baptists well in hand,
And we should have given Wardle a fearful smashing.
The united Nonconformist vote was also to put Stower in the County Council, me in the District Council, and Creasey in the Chair of the Parish Council,
Uprooting those reactionary brutes Todd and Sol Dane:
Now all our beautiful plans are ruined by this bastard tailor. . . .

I'm sorry I let Winterbourne persuade me to stand for the District Council;
If I agree to the Chapel backing Cutts I lose Stower's and Creasey's help,
Whilst if I work for Bennington our folk will turn against me:
Politics is a bad business.

7.—Billy Bean

It's no use shouting for more houses,
Nor pigstys neither, as I tell Mr Toulson:
You can't build without bricks
Unless you're going back to clay walls and thatch, same as Hordle,
And if the Government don't soon provide 'em
I shall give up bricklaying
And take more allotments.
Don't I manage three now in my spare time?
My mother used to say that I should be a farmer,
And why not?
My three plots is a sight to see,
While the others has more thistle-nobs than potato-tops,
And Mr Williamson says my Up-to-Dates are the finest about:
They remind you of the old Magnum Bonums we had when I was a boy.
The Council should cut Mogg's Grange up for holdings;
It belonged to the village in the olden days:
Nobody ought to have more than twenty acres.
They say Lawyer Ferrett is getting a petition for us to sign,
And then we shall get a share,
While Mogg will be put into another farm
Which the Earl is kindly fixing for him.
Won't Mogg be pleased!

8.—Australian Waddy

Being fixed in England on long leave
I thought I'd take the opportunity, before returning to the front,
To have a squint at the village
Where father was fired out by some nobleman because he wouldn't go to church.
Blamed if I didn't find an old boy who claimed he was my grandad:
He was old enough to play the part,
And full of chatter when primed with ale.
He didn't seem upset about the old church affair,
And made out quite a different reason why they tarred and feathered dad and run him out of the village one Saturday night on a rail.
It might be so!
Not that anything would upset grandad;
He'd swap the family Bible with all the names written in it for half a pound of tobacco.
I must say he's stuck to his guns,
And I'm proud of him.
Fletton's not a bad place for a holiday—
I've had a rare run—
But *she* says it's not safe for us to meet any longer in the same spot,
So we're going to try the Ruined Tower;
No one goes there at night.

9.—John Joseph Goose

Between me losing my last two teeth
And the war taking all the bite out of the whisky,
I'd as lief be dead as alive.
Last of the old Gulland bargemen,

I learnt my trade before the railway came;
My skin's that tough a knife won't cut it,
And my fist's like applewood knots
As many found.
Fletton village is run by grocers and local preachers now;
But how the hell can men be reared on milk?
In my young days Fletton was something like!
The pubs a-go all night wi' lights and noise,
Men and girls, and music, and fighting
On Sunday morning by the Pump, stripped to their waists.
Where's all the old farmers gone?
Bob Pratt, Jabe Toynbee, Andrew Key, Henry Makins, and the others?
We've Mogg the Welsh thief,
The two Danes, a sheep, and a wolf—
Todd an old fox, Hides a shark,
And young Pinion
What calls himself a gentleman farmer,
Having his dinner at supper-time, and a fool for a wife.
I could farm better with one hand.

10.—Sarah Makins

Things went well at the beginning of the War;
I was rich on the separation allowance,
With what I earned atop of that;
Now Joe's come back with a gamey leg
And spends his pension on booze.
He used to work from light till dark,
(Mr Challand said the best man in Fletton,
Though he never paid him extra);
Now nobody wants him regular
Because he won't stick

And grumbles against them what never went to fight,
While I have to work my fingers to the bone,
Like I did before the war.
It don't go down so well now.
Walker Harrod got himself killed, and his missis is all right
With nothing to bother about as long as she lives:
Some women have all the luck.

11.—Minnie Harker

Miss Burtonshaw is too haughty for anything;
I'm really afraid of her,
And so is her class.
(I haven't the heart to punish mine.)
Never shall I forget how Jennie Cook squealed!
That was the day the vicar stayed behind,
After I'd dismissed the school-children,
And put his hand on my ankle
As I sat above him on the platform.
You can't wear much in the hot weather,
But fancy him,
Respected by all and over sixty:
Of course his wife *is* flat-chested.

12.—Nehemiah Stennett

I often wish I'd stopped in Bly
Where there was plenty of life,
Instead of settling down here with Sally Overton.
There's no trade to speak of, excepting Saturday nights
When they come from the farthest Fens for a weekly shave,
And turn all my blades with their stubble.

When I'm running the razor round the Agent's neck
    I'd like to nick it,
Only that wouldn't lower the rent.
Nobody ever gets the better of the Earl
Because he owns the land.
This very shop is leasehold,
And soon falls in to be renewed—at more than double
    rent,
Unless I get round Herbert Dobney.
Last night, returning from the Towers,
Where by appointment I waited on the Earl
To trim his hair,
I lost the footpath through the grounds,
The evening being dusk,
And, walking quiet over grass,
Peeped through the window of a summerhouse
And saw the Lady Betty—the Agent's wife—
In the arms of Oliver Waddy:
Fancy! A private!
But they're not like our lads—those Australians.
She was as tight in his arms as she could be,
And didn't get out scot-free if I know Waddy:
Not that she'd want to by all accounts.
These little bits of information
Are valuable—if used properly.

13.—Lawyer Ferrett (I)

There's nothing so wonderful in the world as a spider
Sitting quietly away from the web in a corner;
You can't see him, but wait until something touches
    the cord!
Folks think because my name is Ferrett
That I run about to suck blood.
That's nonsense: I don't have to:
Any lawyer in a country village can get rich

If he's not a perfect fool;
He's like a grown man amongst children.
Seeing how fat they're getting out of the war
With no taxes to pay,
Either Income, Super, or Excess-Profits,
And no obligation for military service
Either for their sons or their labourers,
It only seems right that some one should take a dividend from them:
My little Monty will do with it;
He is all I have to work for.
Unknown to Fletton I am buying Pantacks Manor:
One thousand eight hundred and seventeen acres,
All in a Ring Fence with a good House.
Before I die I mean to pay off every penny,
For he wants three thousand acres to make himself secure.
English land will go up and up and up:
It's the best security in the world:
It's the only real security.
[That must be an aeroplane!
Jenny heard it before I did.]

14.—Emma Burtonshaw

I came to Fletton because London was killing me;
But I'd rather return
Than my soul should perish amongst barbarians.
It isn't so much the girls' mistress, Minnie Harker,
Whose classroom I daren't go into after hours
For fear of seeing what I couldn't pretend not to,
For towns are immoral too,
And on the whole I prefer it to be open;
All the men here are certainly lustful brutes,
Excepting the saintly vicar with his silver hair;
But—as I say—it's not men's sensuality,
It's their cruelty that horrifies me:

I suppose because I'd never dreamt of it.
They torture dumb animals all day long,
And every farm is like the old Inquisition.
Yesterday at the blacksmith's—Swinton's—
Rufus Oldfield held a horse with the cruel 'twitch'
Twisted around its nostrils
So that it trembled with agony:
They were 'firing' it
To get some extra money for the farmer;
And though the smell of burning flesh made me go into a field and be sick until tea-time
No one seemed to think anything about it.
I suppose Longfellow would have written an ode to the blacksmith,
And Tennyson one to the farmer.
There's a loutish fellow called Bones,
And what goes on at his place, as told by the children (Who enjoy it),
Only a Russian novelist would describe.
If I were a Charlotte Corday or a militant feminist,
I'd cut his throat with a very sharp knife
To draw attention to the horror
That covers this pleasant countryside,
Where they all believe that foxes like being hunted,
That fish enjoy hooks in their throats, horses being spurred, docked, fired, and flogged; and that birds and beasts are naturally meant to be maimed, racked, torn, shot to pieces, left in holes to die of wounds or poison, or perish slowly in traps.
I apologise to the Inquisition;
It had a moral purpose (of a kind);
It didn't torture anybody to get up an appetite or relieve its liver,
Or bring in a profit;
Nor, so far as I know, did it plead in justification that the victims didn't really mind.

15.—Angelina Mogg

How I hate the Chapel!
If only handsome Nevil Dane would look at me instead of that painted Edgerley doll, who's no good to any man, I'd go to church in a minute.
We Moggs are unlucky in love:
Look at Gwin!
Whilst Arthur moons about trying to see Lady Betty;
If he went into the Dower House garden about half-past ten at night he'd see more of her than he bargained for;
When he *does* find out he'll do something reckless.
I expect Vi Challands will catch him, seeing that's the very worst that could happen.
Just because I won't wed until all hope of Nevil's gone,
Every married man from Tubby Ambrose to David Todd thinks I'm fair game.
I suppose I must make my mind up to Anthony Dane:
Nevil would *have* to call on his Aunt.

16.—Moller Holmes

Oliver Waddy's persuading fellows to go to Australia after the war,
But who's going to Australia when the best land's at home?
We're going to have it, too;
A Labour Government is coming,
And all them that works on the land is to own it;
As is only just and right.
Why should one man keep all the land in Fletton,
And them guzzling tenants,
Like Challand and Hides and Todd,
Farm hundreds of acres, which they don't half till,

At a third the rent we would gladly pay ?
They never do any work except ride to market and wear out pub seats.
Us what labour will take the land and not sneak off to Australia.
We've a meeting of the new Union to-night at Hordle,
To decide whether we shall strike in harvest.
(What's that aeroplane doing ?)
It's no good Jesse Munks and Bob Cutts talking about more wages;
We don't want a quid a day,
We want land,
And, by God! we're going to have it.

17.—Doctor Berry

A village doctor is something like God
In that he reads all hearts—
And guesses the Almighty has the heartache.
Fletton's a nest of ants,
Full of intrigue, passion, avarice, and lust;
Disease threading the pattern with its crimson strand,
Foul water everywhere, no sanitation,
And centres of infection like Minnie Harker
Quietly spreading V.D. in every direction.
A whited sepulchre, this bucolic paradise!
The men think of nothing but women and money
And getting more land;
The women think of men when they have time,—
Even that anæmic virgin Miss Burtonshaw,
Who suffers from repression and the usual hysteria.
There's one good thing,
Daniels is a sensible fellow,
And when the bastards are quietly overlaid—
As happens every month or so—
He makes no more fuss than I do:

What's the use ?
The vicar's wife and the nurse try to poke their noses
in,
But we shut them out.
Perhaps the real curse is lawyer Ferrett,
Who stands for property with a big P.
I know why in revolutions they hang lawyers first:
Not that there's any need to kill Ferrett,
He hasn't six months to live:
Won't the poor rejoice,
The asses!
As if there aren't plenty more.
(I hear the wheels of a trap:
Some farmer with the toothache.)

18.—Jacob Harvey

When father came from Hordle
To manage the Golden Cross
I was but a baby;
It was a long rambling thatched house,
And I took it over when a barrel fell on father's head
As he slept in the cellar.
I'm one of the oldest inhabitants
And can remember everything:
The Great Fire, when burning thatch flew like hail;
The storm what knocked ten yards off the steeple;
Farmer Benton's calf with eight legs; the gipsies'
battle;
Hare Petchell's suicide;
Granny Jackson having a new tooth at eighty-three;
The Toll Gate being pulled down,
The rats eating old Blow,
The last time Japhet Ruston crossed the river;
And everything of note for nigh a century.
Things ain't what they was in Fletton;

OLD ENGLAND

The teetotals rules us now:
Look at the withered creatures!
No wonder their wives are always creeping out to prayer meetings on dark nights,
And losing the way home.
(My first used to do that, but I know better now.)
The Feast has fell to nothing;
And the village isn't a shadow of its old self.
I've nothing to do but stand here in the sun—
There's a stranger coming down the street,
It looked at first like the Doctor—
His boots are dusty and he'll want a drink :
MISSIS!

19—Newton Ambrose

If you were interested in what went on around you,
Not vulgarly curious, of course,
But taking notice of local affairs and the well-being of your neighbours,
And especially relations
(For blood's thicker than water,
And always more inclined to boil over);
And supposing you were postmaster,
So all the telegrams went through your hands
And the cards and letters with their tell-tale postmarks,
So that you knew the truth amongst a pack of lies;
And s'pose you went to the Golden Cross or the Ship at night
To sit mum whilst folks talked big,
Able at any second to knock them flat,
And all the time you not only couldn't open your mouth
But daren't so much as let your face show what lies they were telling,
Wouldn't it hurt you inside ?

20.—Jane Woolerton

Life's a queer thing!
Look at me,
Only yesterday a thin strip of a girl
Tripping as light as a linnet,
And now can't count my toes nohow.
When I married Henry out of spite
I made a great mistake;
I should have waited for Emmanuel Broomfield,
Who would have matched me better than Henry:
I'm afraid sometimes of overlaying Henry, the poor little squinney.
Emmanuel always thought my Robin was his;
I swore him down he was wrong,
And we'll leave it at that:
What's it matter anyway?
What's Malachi Smithson staring up at?
Must be an aeroplane;
He'd be better at work for his brother Piggy,
Who would be well advised to keep an eye on his daughter.
I saw her by the Cemetery last night with that Salvation Captain,
Who had hold of her in a very wrong way,
And if Molly hadn't been with me I'd have stopped him.
There's Mrs Barley making for Winterbourne's.
I have grave doubts about Oliver;
Mrs Ruston saw him standing by the door of the Ship on Monday night:
He'll backslide one of these days and we shall never get our bill paid.
Henry's as weak as water.
No! She's going into the Bank—to cash a cheque:
I must catch her as she comes out.

21.—Piggy Smithson

There's nothing like pigs!
I begun from an old sow
(I don't mean she was my mother;
That wouldn't be in the way of nature);
She served me well;
Litter after litter, a grand old girl,
And I've never looked back since.
Pig by pig, acre by acre, I've crept on.
Marrying the master's widow was a great step,
She meant almost as much to me as the old sow.
The Tax Collector's been nosing round;
I proved to him that I lost a pig every day in the year—
Which surprised him:
Farmers don't reckon to pay Income-Tax.
This morning I walked miles across the stubble;
It was alive with pigs!
And what if one dies every day?
There's three born by night.
Folks in towns think one pig's exactly like another;
As if you could mistake 'em!
I know their grunts and how they knot their tails.
It's townsfolk look like one another;
They have to carry their names on bits of cardboard
Not to forget who they are;
But two herds of pigs
Will thread through one another quite easy.
For each of my sixty-four years
I have a thousand pounds:
All from one old sow!
My little Jenny will have the lot,
And I'm marrying her into the best family in Fletton:
Wouldn't the old Dad stare if he could see me now.

22.—The Viscount

Every one goes round on tiptoe
Looking at me as if I were stuffed,
Because I'm heir to all this flummery of tenants, game-keepers, butlers, footmen, family-tree, old lineage, noblesse-oblige, and bend-sinister:
What everybody in England long for, fight over, plot about;
Offer their immortal souls and much more precious youth and health for:
The ownership of a great estate.
A real kingdom—
With even the proverbial rebel in the shape of Mogg,
And all the historic business of the Feudal System
Handed straight on from Charles the First
Without the slightest deviation.
I have less use for it
Than any one who breathes;
I'm for California myself,
Where a little nest-egg
Of sixteen thousand pounds from great-aunt Wincey
Has been secretly transferred.
The bullet through my ankle ended all fighting,
And this Foreign Office billet at Washington is most handy.
I shall stick it out until the war's over,
Then vanish quietly from the scene,
And leave this lot to Fitz:
'Twill suit him like a glove,
And I shall be free!
To-morrow I'm for London,
Where in a Registry Office
Gwinny Mogg will marry me quietly,
And we shall get ten days' honeymoon—
The darling!

(I wish we were in that aeroplane !)
She follows me across as soon as possible.

23.—Moses Skinner and Julius Morgan

Young Aaron Tharp lived there!
Not quite sharp ?
Not quite, I fear!
He'd a nice little place as his father made;
Now he's gone to pot I be much afraid.
Old Aaron Tharp was true and sound,
Respected by the country round;
To think as his name should be forgotten!
If he'd known what a fool he had begotten!
He toiled and moiled into his grave
To leave a lad what couldn't save:
No note of grace, no sense of cash,
He lost his all by being rash!

And for what ?
For what ?
To play the fiddle!
' Hey diddle diddle.'
To make up tunes in his empty head
And ruin his eyes with the books he read!
He raumed and babbled all day long
About the way to sing a song;
Followed the lads at plough about:
To hear them sing would make him shout;
He'd sit in the bar at the Ship all night,
To catch the tunes was his delight
Or to play the fiddle about the town;
And all the while his trade went down.

He was encouraged by our Parson:
'Twas wrong of Parson!
It's very well for *him* to talk,

To sing and play, and idle walk,
But ain't he paid for doing that?
He minds his bread is buttered fat!
Parsons is sensible, you see,
Almost as cute as lawyers be:
Not quite, a-course, coz no one could—
But very nigh—just as they should:
Parsons is sound at heart, I say,
They never quarrel with their pay.

And so young Aaron fooled about
And none but Parson had a doubt
What he was bound for—poor young lad.
A-course I'll own—though he was mad—
Them tunes he played, them songs he sung,
They 'minded you of being young.
They took *me* back, a boy again,
At work with father down the fen,
When all the birds they used to sing
At sunrise till the air did ring,
And sheep and cows would stir about,
With everything to make you shout.
Yes! It was strange what he could do;
His fiddle seemed to mazzle you;
The labourers would catch a song—
And they *was* catchy all along:
They sing them yet, and Georgy Bell
He played them by the village well.

But all the same trade didn't mend,
Until at last there came the end.

They sold him up, lock, stock, and stone,
And off he went away, alone
Because he sung but couldn't save;
I think his father in his grave
Must sure a-stirred, however deep:
That smash would waken any sleep!

Young Aaron went—
I dunno where—
They say he's gone to Manchester;
And there, mayhap, mid soot and smoke,
Makes music for the city folk;
Plays on his fiddle anywhere
Them tunes he learned at Fletton Fair
From shepherds or from wagon-boys,
Or men at plough—or any noise;
He made his tunes out of the air
From birds or beasts—he didn't care;
Yet Parson says he'll make a name;
(Our Parson what's a deal to blame!)
As if he could by fiddle-fad
Get half the name his father had.

Lost in some smoky town he plays
And thinks, I lay, on sunny days
Of all the things that make life dear,
Like beans and bacon, cheese and beer;
A dreamy, good-for-nothing lad,
Sure bound to lose all what he had.
He might have risen and come to be
As high as any you can see,
And been well known the country round
As comfortable, warm, and sound.
His name *is* known for many a mile;
It raises far and wide a smile;
While folk they whisper *not right sharp!*
A fool! A fool! was Aaron Tharp.

24.—Reuben Holmes

It's a good thing to work for an Earl like ours;
I might have been laying alongside Elisha Pratt and
Walker Harrod,
Or had a bullet in my belly like Levi Swinton,

Who had no call to go—the bloody fool!
What's the good of Moller talking rubbish?
He might as well be working here with me.
What better job could you want than gardening at the Towers?
The four of us—
Ben and Joe Wilders, brother Arthur, and me—
Are not too hard pressed;
Neither, if it comes to that, is any of the staff,
From Boneses lass to that stuck-up witch's daughter,
To say nothing of Milly Jackson and Ada King.
Dolph Swift and Jerry King get a damned sight more out of all this than any of the family,
Excepting—mebbe—Lord Fitz.
There's more consumed in the kitchens than upstairs,
And still more taken quietly into cottages that I could mention.
Moller says this House should be a village hall:
I can see Peg Leg and Silly Sam in the library,
Or Min Harker in the Countess's bed.
Fletton *does* want a Reading Room:
Four have been started in my time, but they always peter out.
Esau Burrows reckons if Fletton was in America we'd have two if not three Movie Halls,
But I don't hold with those Yanks,
They want to upset everything.
As I tell Will Pratt, if this park was cut into allotments I should be slaving like Job Creasey and no better off than I am now.

25.—Moll Overton

Bill needn't fancy he's going to do as he likes because I've left him to come home to mother,
On account of his carryings-on with Herbert Dobney's wife,

What held her nose so high, when all the while she was meeting Bill after prayer-meeting in Stower's garden.
What will Bill's brother John say when he hears of it?
I found it out through a brooch rattling on to the floor when he undressed:
It had her initials on so he couldn't get out of it;
But he's not going to have a housekeeper:
I know them housekeepers,
They'd slip out of bed and go through his pockets while he was snoring;
I'd go back sooner.

26.—Grandfather Waddy

I'm very old and don't care how soon I die;
Not that I want to go before my time—
Nobody doesn't what's in his right mind—
But I've a sort of satisfied feeling on account of my grandson Oliver turning up on leave.
They've called me 'Chartist,' 'Fenian,' 'Infidel,' and 'Hordle Hound' by turn,
But, being the only man in Fletton as couldn't be kicked out
By reason of a common-right that goes with this cottage—
The only one not stolen from the village—
I've been able to stick to my guns against the whole crew,
Nobility, Church, and Chapel.
When I was a lad, I used to sit by the fire listening to father and uncle William talking about Waterloo:
They was scared of Boney, like everybody else,
But if he'd only been English-born he'd a led the poor against the rich
And things would have been different.
Father wouldn't have been left to starve with one leg, as he was

(Only Uncle William stood by him);
Father'd say sometimes 'twas a pity Boney didn't win,
Because they would never have enclosed the Commons;
But that's going too far!
Although when I've been in jail for trying to get the labourers to band against starvation wages, I've felt pretty desperate:
Yet I've hoped against hope.
And now my grandson has brought tales of a country where things is different:
How it warms my old heart to hear him;
He looks everybody in the face, and nobody threatens to send him to jail,
Neither magistrate, keeper, policeman, parson, nor yet the Earl.
That night he knocked Jackson Challands through the Ship window, when he tried his rough tricks, I got dead drunk with joy;
Nobody never stood up to Challands before:
Now he daren't show himself at the Golden Cross till his face gets straight again.
Oliver tells me religion has never struck root in Australia;
He says they call it Soothing Syrup for Slaves,
Which is one in the eye for Nathan Dodds
And another for my wicked nephew Samuel,
Who sold himself to the Devil to get started farming
And prospers—for a time—like a green bay tree;
Uncle William would turn in his grave if he knew.
That Bowles girl will pay him out.

27.—Adolphus Swift

If you'd read it in the papers you wouldn't believe it;
But it's true enough, and I'm here as proof,
In the one place on earth where I daren't open my lips—

My father's house.
All this is mine if I had my rights;
This wide estate, these titles, honours, dignities,
This wealth uncountable
Should come to me, who am the eldest son, the proper heir
Robbed of my birthright by a sordid trick.
When father found how things stood he got mother to leave the country,
Being terrified at his father's (the late Earl's) strictness;
Giving her a paltry two thousand through a slimy scoundrel who called himself Swift.
Mother had to sign a deed acknowledging this man as my father,
Doing me in the eye for ever.
Not that she could help it,
Her every thought has been for me, I owe her all,
And I am about to repay her as will appear shortly.
Little did she guess when she reared me to hate the name of Coote
That I should find myself established at Fletton Towers
As confidential servant to the young Viscount;
She would have feared I might use violence,
Knowing my high and haughty spirit,
But I have bent my sagacity, and after three years' attention in France and England,
Have obtained my supplanter's confidence.
He trusts me for everything,
And when in consequence of some crime I cannot yet unravel
He was driven to choose flight to escape prison,
He got me to effect the secret transfer of a large sum of money to America,
Whither he is stealing, shortly, with me,
To be followed presently by a wretched girl—
The usual farmer's daughter—

Who, thank God, will hang round his neck like a millstone.
You have only to look at his vicious face
To guess the sort of deed before which he flies the country.
I have transferred the money quite safely to America,
Lodging it in the keeping of a lady who has more right to it than any one,
And who waits my arrival in San Francisco with joyful impatience:
My Mother.

28.—Joe Barks

There's something wrong about this war;
They're taking everybody except them that ought to go first.
Who'd make better soldiers than keepers ?
And yet they swarm as thick as ever, getting honest men into trouble.
Just because I took a short cut home, was that a reason for Walter Jackson to nearly scare me to death by jumping out behind a tree ?
Even if I had wandered into the wood, what of it ?
You don't always notice where you're going when you're thinking,
And he had no right to call me a common poacher;
I can't stop my dog following me for exercise,
And with all these German spies about it's only patriotic to carry a gun.
I told him straight if he didn't take his hand away the other barrel would go off:
Why did he make such a fuss ?
Everybody knows what a cazzlety thing a gun is when your finger's on the trigger,
And if you stumble over a tree-root in the dusk it ain't your fault.

If it hadn't unfortunately happened that, unbeknown to me, a pheasant's head was hanging from my pocket, I should have got the best of it;
Now I'm being hindered from buying pigs for the Army over the paltry business.
I told Peter Harrod so, when he brought the summons, but he only grinned;
No wonder the Germans are winning.

29.—Mildred Pinion

It's been a great satisfaction to rearrange this household in accordance with the best social ideas.
We are the only one of the Tenantry to dine late
(The Edgerleys are really outsiders),
And our claim for acknowledgment can hardly be delayed.
Next time the Agent calls in the evening he'll find us in evening dress,
Which will open his eyes,
And he can't fail to mention it at the Towers.
The only thing I fear is mother,
Who irritates Laurie and doesn't exactly shine in society.
Yesterday I caught her gossiping with George Barks,
Who is ready enough to be familiar at any time.
If people heard of father's business it would be the death of my ambition:
Although any of these bankrupt farmers would have jumped at my money.
Laurie was on his last legs when the war broke out and I just saved him.
Let his aunt look down her long nose as she may;
She'd have been glad to palm her precious Nevil on to me.

Every night I pray that mother will marry again (so long as it isn't in Fletton).
I wish Laurie would get rid of Barks:
All the time he's touching his cap I know he's laughing at me,
And I'm afraid he's trying to get hold of the new housemaid;
I'll put a stop to that, anyhow:
She's a quiet, respectful girl who reads her Bible regularly.

30.—Jerry King

Mother got me a soft job with Mr Coote;
I do see what goes on, and that's a fact.
'Twould make a cat laugh the way the gentry think nobody knows what they're doing;
I believe they look on us like bullocks in a meadow,
Thinking we see but never notice.
I see a lot more than I tell,
The opposite of Joe Cutts who tells a lot more'n he sees—
He's agent for the *Chronicle*—
And as stuck up as Julius Morgan
Who strangers take to be the earl when they see him in his fur coat and white top hat.
When Arthur Mogg tried to draw me about Lady Betty
I didn't let on, though he gave me three drinks and a cigar.
Nehemiah Stennett hinted yesterday, but I looked innocent,
And he'll never dare say anything in Fletton.
I know all about her meeting Waddy in our grounds;
She nips into the old summer-house like a weasel after a rabbit,
But Waddy's a match for her.

If I told what I've seen, there isn't a soul would
believe me.
I wish I could take his place some dark evening;
If I was more his size I would try:
All cats are gray at night;
Anyway, I dream I've done it, which is the next best
thing.
It's set me against the maids here, more's the pity,
Because I had plenty of time to attend to them;
But when you've seen something better you can't do
with common.
I wish Miss Williamson wasn't so stand-offish—
If she's at the Feast to-night I'll ask her to go on the
Roundabouts;
That would put Meg Ambrose's nose out of joint.
I must go now and shave Mr Coote,
Who moons all day with his nose in the air,
And sometimes writes for hours on end a lot of
nonsense that nobody can make head nor tail of:
I've heard the Earl laughing about it more than once.
Sometimes Mr Coote gives me half a crown and talks
about the villagers,
Asking me lots of questions and wanting to know what
they're up to:
As if I should tell!

31.—Gustavus Bennington

For five years I have laboured in the Cause,
Working patiently to reduce the permanent Tory
majority,
With the aid of Fletcher, Woolerton, and other
stalwarts;
But the appearance of Cutts as Labour Candidate has
dashed all my hope of so lowering the enemy's
poll that Headquarters should transfer me to a
more promising place.

This defection of the agricultural workers is definitive and fatal;
Their ingratitude appals me!
I have contributed handsomely through various channels to their Union,
And to all the Chapels for miles around,
And attended some fourteen hundred sales of work, missionary meetings, social guilds, bazaars, harvest thanksgivings, anniversary meetings, Sunday-school feasts, prayer meetings, choral services, and addresses to the young (of both sexes),
So that this stab in the back has shocked me terribly and must cause me to reconsider my position.
Whilst it was a question of raising wages or breaking up the Great Estates and lowering the crest of the bloated farmers,
According to our Great Leader's Land Campaign,
By gradual purchase for the State at pre-war prices,
All was for the best;
But these poisonous attacks upon land and property
Threaten our very constitution,
And it seems possible that the parties of Law and Order may be forced to combine permanently in defence of their rights.
After thirty-eight years' untiring industry in Birmingham I amassed a competence
Which enabled me to devote myself to my country's interests,
And I could not view with equanimity the propagation of such insidious doctrines.
These benighted rural spots,
I sadly fear,
Are not favourable to Progressive Liberalism;
There is no interest in Vegetarianism, Anti-Vaccination, Homœopathy, Anti-Vivisection, Anti-Papacy, Anti-Militarism, or Internationalism;

Anti-Feminism is rampant, but from brutal and reactionary motives only—
Whilst Prohibition provokes a torrent of blasphemy.
That brute Cutts, a blustering fellow of doubtful morals,
Is immensely popular with the ignorant peasantry of Hordle and Fletton,
And ridicules not only my efforts but my person:
I will cast the dust of this ungrateful constituency from my feet for ever.

32.—James Hanbury

These amalgamations are the devil!
Once we knew exactly where we were,
But now Skinner calls every Saturday to put a new plate up,
And our last title is so complicated that I can't possibly remember it:
All that's no good for a Bank.
The last straw was this morning when a stranger with white spats and a beaky nose stepped out of a motor and said he was the new District Manager.
All my book-keeping is to be changed,
With reports to make you dizzy,
Whilst I can't lend anybody more than five pounds without his sanction.
I've lent thousands on my own authority in twenty-one years,
And nowhere has the old County Bank lost less than in Fletton;
Because I know my business.
I said as much, and got a rap on the knuckles:
'I can retire on a pension if I prefer,'
And they'll put some schoolboy in my place—
A nice mess he'll make!

When I say I know my business, I mean it;
I know to a sovereign what any farmer's safe for,
And no breast is barred before me.
I've had to tighten the rein on Morton Enderby;
Only yesterday Frederick Dobney went on his knees
on this very mat,
With tears rolling from his white beard on to his white
waistcoat,
Little thinking I knew about the second mortgage on
his property.
I know which of the Danes is going downhill,
Thompson Rowett daren't plead poverty to me, as he
does to his widows and orphans.
I know which three men in Fletton are worth
fifty thousand each.
The war's brought great prosperity to Fletton;
More money's being made here than anybody dreams;
And as no farmer pays income-tax to speak of,
And as they don't spend any faster, however rich they
get,
It grows and grows and grows.
When the Viscount's confidential man walked in with
a power of attorney
And transferred the Dowager Wincey's legacy to a
New York bank in his own name, I said nothing;
It wasn't my business,
But Swift would be surprised if he knew who I am.
It's twenty-seven years to-day since the Earl gave me
£100 to find some one to arrange that settlement
and hold my tongue,
And when last year a draft came for Master Adolphus
from San Francisco
I recognised Martha King's handwriting immediately.
I can put two and two together as well as anybody,
And though I have no warrant to interfere,
Over in America an eye has opened that will not close
again in a hurry.

33.—Thompson Rowett

Old Aaron Tharp thought himself clever and snatched
the girl I meant to marry.
He always got more votes than me for the Parish
Council
By reason of his glib tongue and oily ways,
And built up a huge business in hay dealing;
But I kept quietly on, and Providence foreclosed on
him.
I've just landed Deadman's Ground on to that Lon-
doner, Longthorne,
After weeks and weeks of talking him round;
It's been in hand for over a year on account of its cold
wet clay,
And he'll get all the experience of farming he wants
before he's much older.
When he breaks I shall come in again, no doubt.
The world's full of fools!
Young Tharp fancied himself (like his father),
Especially when Parson took notice of his fiddling:
He never will be able to play the fiddle;
I offered to teach him myself, but he told Meg
Ambrose that I knew nothing of music.
Fortunately I was able to control myself,
Because everything comes to him that waits,
And when, as might be expected, he came a cropper,
I was able to give my son-in-law the first tip,
And he secured the house and business very reason-
ably.
Only adversity can teach the spendthrift,
And if Tharp fiddles for coppers in the streets he'll
learn to value the advice of wiser men.
That young Hemsley's another such,
But his mother—a grand woman—has the whip-hand
over him.

Who'd a thought to see my daughter in the fine house
that Aaron Tharp built ?
I often call in for a cup of tea just to stretch my legs
beside the marble mantelpiece and think about
it.
Sarah's very fond of me, as well she may be:
I should have done the like for that wretched Annie
If she hadn't run away.

34.—Rufus Oldfield

A pig-dealer is Joe Barks, but he deals as well in dead horses and old iron, and he's a market-gardener, and is always ready to do anybody out of their last ha'penny. But mainly he's a pig-jobber. He believes in pigs! Pigs *is* pigs to Joe; he spends his days among them, and I really believe he'd like to sleep in a sty. Knows one from another by its grunt! Yet me, what's been a farmer, man and boy, all my life, couldn't do that. He loves to talk about pork and hams, and cross-breeding and such. Oh, he's fly! Popped into my yard he did, one morning just after the war broke out when I was leaning on the gate, thinking about breakfast, and up he slives as innocent as milk.

'Morning, Mr Oldfield,' says he.

'Morning, Joe,' says I.

'And how's things this morning ?'

'Nothing particular, excepting wheat's up.'

'That's the war!'

'I dare say, Joe,' says I. 'War's always good for farmers, my father used to say, and who knows but what everything'll go up likewise. Maybe pigs'll rise.'

'Ha!' says Joe, all short and nasty.

'But if wheat rises, why not pigs ?' I says.

'I'll tell you why, Mr Oldfield. Have you heard

how the Germans rushed like a lot of bullocks across Belgium one night, tramping everything under foot? They set fire to the stacks and houses, chucked the folks into the flames, collared the horses and pigs——'

He stopped and looked at me sideways.

'What of it, Joe, what of it? We're not in foreign parts, thank goodness. Ain't we got a Navy?' says I.

'You're not a special constable, farmer; but I am, and here's my regulations. When the Germans land, we've got to set fire to our stacks, smash our wagons and carts up, and set off full gallop across Hordle Waste with our live stock.'

'The devil we have! When be they coming?'

'Tuesday night, I'm *told*; but maybe that's a lie. Anyway, here's the regulations all in print with the Royal Arms on top, so you'll be ready now I've warned you, as 'tis my duty. At the word you set off full pelt.'

'Don't talk like a fool, Joe, when you know very well as fat pigs can't gallop, not if the old Kaiser himself was after them,' says I.

'Then you'll have to kill and bury them beforehand, because fall into the Germans' hands they must *not*.'

'But good God! I've got fourteen beautiful pigs all very nigh fat, as I was bid eighty-three shillings apiece for last Monday, and I can't afford to lose them.'

'Then what a pity you didn't take it,' says Joe, in a nasty voice what sent shivers all down my back. 'I sold mine this morning before the news got out, and they're off this very afternoon. I shall have the money in five-pound notes sewn in my shirt, so as to be ready to bolt, day or night.'

'That's an idea! I'll sell mine to-morrow and do the same.'

'You won't,' says he.

'Why not?' says I.

'Because these bills that'll be out this afternoon will make it so as nobody won't take pigs for presents. Well, I'll be off. Good-day to you, farmer.'

'Here, I say, Joe, couldn't you send mine away with your lot?'

'I don't see how I could, or I would with pleasure.'

'Tchah! You could easy. Only fourteen of them, and all beautiful pigs. Look now, I'll take the same as I was bid, which is eighty-three shillings apiece. Here! Stop! Drat the fellow! What'll you give?'

'We couldn't bargain, and I don't want to offend you. These Germans have knocked the bottom out of the pig trade altogether.'

'What strange rascals they must be. But you wouldn't offend me, Joe.'

'Think of those Germans, farmer. They'll be as savage as bulls if there's no pork when they come; for they live on sausage.'

'But would they pay me?'

'I dare say they'll count it in your favour, and put you out of your misery before they chuck you on the burning stacks.'

'What's your figure?'

'I'd rather not.'

'Come on.'

'Fifty-two apiece.'

'There ain't such a price,' says I.

'Then good-day to you.'

'I couldn't lose on them.'

'Then keep them.'

'No, no! I'll take sixty . . . curse you!' says I.

'Done!' says Joe, and 'done' I was—right in the eye—because he made five pounds apiece of them that very afternoon, and the Germans never came at all.

35.—Maurice Fitzherbert Coote

The work to which I have dedicated my life is almost finished,
And will be launched presently upon an unappreciative world.
Like Nietzsche, I write (more or less) posthumously,
For few there be who could follow my exposition,
My winding search, graphic analysis, and complete survey
Of that great master of the pen—
Honoré de Balzac.
Thanks to Geoffrey's hospitality
I have been able to spend seventeen short years upon my masterpiece,
Undisturbed by sordid cares.
I shall dedicate it to him in acknowledgment,
Although he has never read one line of the *Comédie*.
My life has been well spent in following those labyrinthine windings,
Holding the scent from scene to scene,
Illustrated by coloured diagrams and genealogical trees,
And tracing connections which the Master himself overlooked.
It is better to dream Romance than seek it in the flesh.
Fancy seeking adventures here!
For Fletton is an epitome of England,
Dull, sodden, flat, insipid;
The peasantry are vicious, dreary, and lustful by turns;
Our tradespeople and farmers are worse—
I needn't describe them—
Whilst our neighbours are dullest of all.
The Master would have failed in Fletton for want of material;

Even the war could not rescue it from the slough,
And its memory will perish
Unless, mayhap, posterity notes that ' here Fitzherbert
Coote evolved his masterpiece.'

36.—Timothy Williamson

The secret of success is fair dealing—
Nothing else is wanted—
For once your neighbours find you're ready to stick to
your word they flock to trade.
I've never broken a promise, nor run back on a
bargain,
And I've always paid to the day;
My potato and straw business has risen steadily in
consequence,
Until the neighbours won't leave me for anybody.
It's no good Jack Key bidding a higher price;
He only catches fools and new-comers;
Everybody else knows he'll throw up if the market
goes against him,
Or leave potatoes until they're half-rotten in the graves
before he moves them.
When the Potato Boom fell through, and everybody
broke their bargains,
And ' Eldorado ' and ' Northern Stars ' dropped from
their weight in gold to be only fit for pig-food,
I kept to my purchases although it nearly sunk
me;
To-day I am better off than ever.
It's true that scoundrels flourish for a time—
There's Thompson Rowett and his son-in-law
Stower—
That precious pair of hypocrites;
They rob and lie and cheat and prosper,
And everybody calls them respectable.

I used to think lightning would strike Rowett to the earth
When he got up in the Wesleyan pulpit on Sundays,
But it never did;
And now he's well thought of and his family spreading over all Fletton.
Look at my wicked sister, the Witch, with her horrible daughters;
One living in open immorality with Tom Bavin,
The other in service at the Towers:
Everybody knows what goes on there.
It's enough to make me want to change my name.

37.—Mrs Walker Harrod

We waited three years because we couldn't get a cottage
(There's always more husbands than houses in Fletton)
And then he was called up on our wedding day.
What made it hardest was being killed the very minute he got out:
It was just murder!
Grandad Jenkins keeps saying that everything passes,
But he's a hundred and doesn't care:
I want my man back.
Sally Makins tells everybody I'm lucky to have a pension and no child:
I hope her man will knock her other eye out.
Why should they have took him and left the farmers' sons—
The two young Todds, Mr Pinion, Mr Edgerley, and Nevil Dane,
To say nothing of their gamekeepers, gardeners, and motor-drivers.
Walker went because Mr Mogg couldn't get him off

Through not having a pull.
Fletton's full of strong young fellows who ought to be
    fighting,
But they stay at home and get rich,
While everybody looks up to them:
The world isn't fair!

38.—Joe Cutts

[Current contributions for the *Bly Chronicle and Weekly Advertiser*.]

On Thursday next an Anniversary will be held at the Baptist Chapel at 2.30 p.m., when a sermon will be preached by the Rev. Erasmus Tyrell of Bly. Tea will be provided at 4.45 p.m. in the Sunday-school Room by prominent ladies of the congregation.

I, Herbert Dobney, give notice that I will not be responsible for debts incurred by my wife, Ellen Dobney.

Hens trespassing on the Grange Farm will be shot in future.—(Davis Mogg).

An address will be given at the Wesleyan Chapel on Saturday afternoon next by Eli Gunn, Esq., of Hordle, on 'Prohibition and its Blessings.' The chair will be taken at 2.15 by Thompson Rowett, Esq. There will be a silver collection in aid of the Young People's Temperance Guild Annual Outing.

Anybody scandalising me will be prosecuted with the utmost rigour of the law.—(Laura Cook).

Mr Gustavus Bennington of Platt's Hole wishes to announce that, owing to a sudden indisposition, all engagements are cancelled until further notice.

At Bly on the 6th inst., James Edward Bones, farmer, was fined 2s. 6d. and 4s. costs for cruelty to three ewes at Fletton.

The amount realised by the Bazaar held in the Vicarage Garden on the 3rd inst., in aid of the Church Organ Renovation Fund, which was opened in the morning by Lady Betty Kyme, and in the afternoon by Mrs A. Hurcomb-Knatt, of Christchurch, New Zealand, was £74 7s. 8½d. A magnificent result.

A fox was found shot dead last Sunday morning by Mr Jabez Wells in his stackyard. The perpetrator of this dastardly deed has not yet been discovered.

Mrs Trotter Goose has received notice from the War Office that her son Saul was wounded on the 14th ult. in France. It is understood that the injury was not serious and the sympathy of the Parish is with Mrs Goose for a speedy recovery.

The Village Feast has somewhat recovered from the first shock of war, but owing to the fuel shortage and lighting and other restrictions the scene at night lacks much of its old brilliancy. Mr Julius Morgan, when interviewed, said he was carrying on under terrible difficulties, but should do his best to keep the countryside cheerful.

We notice that our esteemed neighbour, Mr Jackson Challands, has purchased a new motor-car.

It is rumoured that the Bly Co-operative Society is about to open branches in Fletton and Hordle.

The energetic local secretary of the Agricultural Workers' Union, Mr M. Holmes, informs us that eleven new members were enrolled last week.

There is a revival of the old rumour that after all the telephone may be coming. Several prominent merchants and agriculturists in Fletton are interested in the campaign, and the Postmaster of Bly is giving the application earnest consideration.

Our brilliant delegate to the 'Mother of Parliaments,' Arbuthnot Wardle, Esq., M.P. (at present visiting the Towers), has contributed a speech before the Knights of the British Empire upon the Diseases of Pheasants. It was described by an eyewitness as 'flashing with knowledge and instinct with wit.'

Fletton is honoured by a visit from one of its eminent children, the well-known astronomical expert, Mr Emmanuel Creasey, who is spending Feast Week with our esteemed neighbour, his mother. Fletton's scientist has been appointed to a high post in the Mother Land after a long sojourn in distant climes, particulars of which we hope to give in our next issue.

At the last three sittings of the Military Court at Bly, Fletton's applicants have all received exemption. As the Recruiting Officer (Capt. Wilfred Coote, M.C.) well said: 'Fletton has done its duty.'

In spite of the war Messrs Mullens Ltd. of Bly and Friston, the great potato merchants, have completed the third stretch of the light railway connecting their various farms with their Depot at Washover Ferry. It is also understood that they are installing motors in their barges on the Brent. Such enterprise deserves prosperity.

The following shows Fletton's war record to date:—

Killed.—Walker Harrod, Elisha Pratt, Jacob Creasey, Jnr.

Permanently Invalided.—Viscount Colville, Joe Makins, Moller Holmes, Butler Atkin, Jnr.
Wounded but returned to the Front.—D. Makins, R. Stower, L. Swinton, Joe Toulson, Joe Toynbee, Jim Harker, Edward Wells, S. Hodgson, Ed. Ambrose, C. Bones, Esau Burrows, Jr., T. Woolerton.

39.—Captain Norman Jameson

For nearly a year I have laboured under the banner of Blood and Fire,
Marching the streets with my two faithful women.
There are over many Chapels here,
Whilst the Methodists with unfair competition,
Led by that reprobate Winterbourne,
Sing enticing hymns in the market-place.
Salvationism isn't suited to places where there are no slums,
And nobody lies drunk in the streets to be rescued.
There are no real poor, no real crimes here.
Last Saturday night I was driven to stand at the door of the Golden Cross,
Collecting pennies in my tambourine for Sunday's dinner;
The game's not worth the candle.
If it hadn't been for Hannah and Laura Cook I should have been stranded long ago,
But politics are stirring again and a ready tongue ought to find a market.
Meantime, I've a little plan up my sleeve,
Which comes off to-night
And should result in something useful.
It's a gamble, of course—
But life's nothing else.

40.—Abraham Smart

When I'm hurrying about my trade folks think I'm wrapped up in money-getting,
But in the middle of a field of potatoes or reckoning the live weight of a pig
I'm not there at all, if they did but know it:
I'm really skating.
Spring and summer and autumn are only waste of time,
But when the first frost comes I begin to wake up.
It's grand to live in these Fens where the water's shallow and undisturbed;
I'm always the first to venture and the last to leave,
And while there is ice to bear I wouldn't stop for the best bargain going.
Clear sky, red sun, black ice, and sharp skates:
That's my idea of heaven.
You swing from side to side and flash past some stranger who fancies himself,
Whilst your blood races through your body.
Now and again in the great frosts you can get all over the county,
And at the Championship, before thousands of folk, beat all comers.
It's good to be Champion!
But I'm just as happy skating home twenty miles with a gang of friends:
If the wind's against us we form up in file and keep time,
Singing together as we rush along like an express train,
And holding our breath when we come to where a ferryboat's been across two days before.

41.—Hannah Cook

You'd think Lena had married Mr Dane instead of the postmaster by the airs she puts on;
Brother Jim left off trading at their shop because of that.

I hope Lottie Burrows won't trap Jim;
They say she's taken *all steps* to get her uncle to leave her his fortune.
We don't have to run after any one,
'Coz Albert gets good wages now, being head-man to the herd;
But he's not going abroad with 'em to please Mr Dane:
We'll die where we've lived.
Of course I know Albert hankers after the Primitives,
And when Captain Jameson leaves—
Which he soon will I'm very much afraid—
We'll think about going back
Providing they give way over the harmonium.
They'll value me now they've seen what I can do,
And if Liz Dodds is ratting there'll be no one else to play.
My sister-in-law fancies the Captain—
Poor fool!
Of course, Laura's useful with the tambourine,
And I don't want to stop her helping;
That's why I've never told her the truth.
He says his wife's married again,
But Lena's seen her post cards.
Eliza Sharples called to see the old dad Tuesday night, and saw something,
Though she won't say *what*:
If I thought Laura had the Captain in bed I'd scratch her eyes out!
He says he shall be 'late' this evening;
It'll be as well if I follow him when he goes out after supper.

42.—Hamilton Dring

My life is like one of those days when a sea-fog comes across the fen,
And you don't know where you are or where you're going.

Nineteen years I've lived in this school-house,
Built by the late Earl and given to the Church
(To propitiate Providence, I suppose).
The young ones come from the Council School at seven years old,
To be educated by me and grounded in religion by the Vicar.
I teach them their three 'R's,' inculcate a due respect for their betters,
And at fourteen they drift away with nothing to show for it.
The labourers' boys turn into servile animals,
The farmers' boys lead their small herd,
And the girls become inferior creatures, each in her own station.
They can sign their names instead of making a mark
And read the Government posters or the hymns on Sundays:
Isaac Creasey and Mogg still spell out each verse for the old folks:
But that's all!
I had hopes of Cullen who took to literature as if he was born for it—
A brilliant lad who'd have done me credit—
Only his father kept him in Fletton until he couldn't stand it any longer,
And he hadn't the guts to run away.
I kept one of his unfinished poems by me,
The rest of his work having vanished;
It shows great promise,
And he might have immortalised Fletton.
I could never make head or tail of his cousin Tharp,
Who hated books and continually played truant;
Yet the Vicar thought the world of him,
And still does in spite of his downfall.
Not being fond of music I can't pretend to judge,

But I fear there is nothing notable about his performance or composition.
He played the fiddle well, but so does Mr Rowett.
There was a queer foreign strain in him.
Now that poor Cullen's gone I've lost interest in everything.
It's true (as Mr Lowe says) that Fletton is a world in itself,
But (as he says) it's all on a petty scale.
We've the Family at the head of our Feudal System,
Sending its roots through all strata
And spreading its branches over all divisions,
Overshadowing each destiny.
The Church is an upper class, taking time from the Family;
With the great Feudal Barons: the Danes, Todd, Smithson, Challands, Hides, and the others;
Each in his own castle with his own retainers.
The Baptists keep to themselves and are intensely respectable,
The Creaseys and Dobneys their leaders.
The Wesleyans are our solid Middle Class,
Headed by those well-to-do tradesmen Woolerton, Fletcher, and Stower;
Who busy themselves with temperance work.
The Methodists under Mogg and Enderby are mostly labourers;
While the rest, like old Waddy and Thomson, centre round the public-houses.
(The Salvation Army never did count:
There are only two half-witted women and a sewer rat.)
Throw in a welter of petty rivalry over Parish District and County Council elections,
With a terrific amount of intrigue centring round the Agent's office who's to have farms,
And there you are.

One thought animates their lives throughout,
And if they were examined at death one word would
be found engraven on their hearts:
That thought, that word is Land.
No art, no learning come near,
Except for a visit from Emmanuel Creasey,
The distinguished Astronomer who doesn't receive the
slightest recognition from the Family.
Even the war hasn't touched Fletton:
A few lads have gone,
But they always left when they grew up;
And what wives remain are better off than ever with
the separation allowance
(Like Mrs Toynbee with her fourteen).
They probably hope that peace will never come
(Which is what all farmers hope).
The only ones to suffer are the Vicar and myself,
Who feel the pinch in our fixed incomes.
Mr Hanbury and Inspector Daniels have feathered
their nests,
While everybody else benefits in one way or another
by the rising prices.
There are times when I could drown myself
If it wasn't for the nights I spend with Cobbler George—
Our champion draughts player—
Who's a chatty soul and the best of company:
I win or draw about one in three
Which is more than any one else in Fletton can boast
of.

43.—Jabez Wells

When we was hoeing
We'd hear 'em come,
And used to stare
Up in the air
As if we was dumb;

But now we hardly ever notice 'em.

'Coz—after all—
There's nowt in 'em
When you gets anigh 'em.
Swinton, he says they're motor-cars
With floats fixed on, like moffry-bars;
Here's nowt about 'em as'll stand
Against a reaper what can tie
A double knot and cut the thread,
Knotting the string before your eye;
'There's nowt like that to find,' says he;
But that's a miracle, you see!

And yet, 'tis fine to watch 'em fly
Like a gaggle of geese against the sky,
You see 'em V-shaped, high as high;
The leader first, then each one follows,
When all of a sudden, darting like swallows—
Head over heels—wing over wing—
They frisk about like lambs in spring:
I tell you they can do any mortal thing.

Of all, I loves to watch 'em best
When they come floating home at night,
Their little bodies sparkling bright,
With wings held stiff behind 'em—so—
Down, down they go—
All diving slantways, homeward to their nest.

This war's a dolch of talk;
A noise, a scare, a wonder in the sky;
Less bacon on our baulk—
I dunno why—
The labourers be getting better pay,
Here's no more talk of eighteenpence a day;
And farmers, one and all, be crazed sure-lie!

With pork at famine price, and news of fighting
From Ned's what out in foreign parts and writing,
And guns at night-time rumbling away
As if they couldn't do enough by day:
They've made my pig lose stones and stones, I lay.
That Mrs Woolerton ain't got no sugar—
Confound her eyes!
She says as how the Germans ate it all.
A pack of lies!
She's hid it in her cellar, that I know,
'Coz George's wife she told our Susan so.
Parson he says as how the world be ending;
It's cracked—he seems to think—beyond his mending;
And over all these aeroplanes be round,
As if there wasn't room along the ground:
Rot the old things!
But there! I guess as how
Some day they'll set the critters on to plough,
Or fix 'em up for watering the crops,
So as they can moisten the turnip-tops.
They'd be alright of course for scaring crows:
The mucky things!
They take a lot of scaring, God he knows
What gave 'em wings;
Yes! If they scare the crows it would be grand.
Meanwhile—they goes to war,
And me—
I tills the land.

44.—George Barks

If the master gets a car I must learn her ways,
But I hope he won't;
Give me Spider (our blood mare) in the still-wheeled
gig
And you can have your engines:

P'raps though 'twould stop missis from driving my horses;
She ruins their mouths and breaks their hearts,
Always clicking and flicking the whip however they try,
And lands them home in a white lather.
Women and parsons, parsons and women,
God keep the reins out of their hands.
Missis fusses too much with her garden—
Pergolas, begonias, and the devil knows what:
Twould drive me crazy if I hadn't this harness-room.
There's no moon to-night and when I've lit the stove
The new housemaid will be able to slip across.
Missis nearly caught us last Sunday;
The open stove-door shone a light through the window
And she walked in without knocking;
But I heard the cinders crunch
(That I strew outside on purpose)
And popped Mary behind the cupboard door,
Closing the stove with my foot.
Missis had better look after her own:
I know who's oiled the lock of Mary's bedroom door!
I must go now and give Spider a bran-mash.

45.—Arthur Mogg

I saw a rabbit in a net one day
When Joe Barks didn't hear me,
And I know just how it felt.
It's easy for Gwin to say a man can do what he likes,
But father's been so good to me, and his heart would break if I chucked it.
He means me to carry on the Grange and the Tabernacle and the fight with the Earl,
And marry Miss Smithson;

But I hate all our money-grubbing neighbours:
Morning to night, year in, year out, nothing else in their minds;
I wonder it isn't written in letters of gold over the chapel door.
They worship money, and have no thought for anything higher:
Good reason why!
Any one who tries it is soon ruined,
Like Joe Gilliat, Georgy Bell, and Thomson South,
Or Aaron Tharp, my best friend—
Smashed flat and flung to rot.
Only Aaron didn't mind;
His soul was in music and came through his fingers:
He would come to chapel when we sang 'Cranbrook,'
Which he called the finest tune on earth—
Worthy of Handel—
And rightly to be played by trumpets and an organ:
Now—where is he?
Fletton Village is so near Hell that you can't tell the difference.
If I was like the young Viscount, 'twould be all right;
He takes to it like a duck to water,
Without a thought in his empty head but vanity and possession.
I wish Angelina had been a boy;
She could wear father's breeches to a T.
If I was only a farm-labourer I should be happy,
And would make sonnets, whenever I felt moved, to her I worship,
That bright star in her radiant beauty, set on a pinnacle,
Unapproachable by those of meaner clay:
The Lady Betty.
I might have spoken to her at the Bazaar,
Only my breath went when she smiled so graciously across her stall:

There is something fairy-like, some spiritual essence
That inspires me to higher flights.
I wish sonnets weren't so difficult
And you didn't get tangled up about the seventh line.

46.—Joseph Thomson

They want to turn me out of my beautiful house
Because I'm not as rich as some,
But if it's a little bit in want of repair
That only makes it homelier.
My father was doctor in Fletton for fifty years,
Clever as the best, and wanted everywhere.
He saved the old Earl's life once
And got the freehold of this house in consequence.
If he drank like a fish, he worked like a horse!
I can't say I copy him at the work:
It isn't worth while;
I can get a living by odd ways, using my brains,
Especially in the fowl and egg business
Which has been most profitable lately,
And almost made up for the drop in the carrying trade—
Which isn't worth a kick!
Books for Townsend
(As if he hadn't plenty),
Tinned eatables for the Edgerleys
(Why can't she shop at home ?)
Papers for Joe Cutts, sweets for Maria Creasey, and leather for Seth Jordan.
Be that as it may—
Never, never will I sell my old home with its shady trees.
Dr Berry sorely wants it, and so does Isaac Creasey;
They're always at me but I scorn their bids.
The river flows by my garden handy for fishing,

Only disturbed by the Hard-Shell Baptists
Who ' dip ' each other near the bridge in their clothes
To wash their sins away.
They put Fullerton under last Sunday,
And damned if there weren't three dead perch on the bank by sunset,
Poisoned by his sins that floated down.
Isaac Creasey is the worst of the Hard-Shells:
He holds a mortgage on my house,
And I should complain to Daniels
Because I have to drink the water,
Only they're building a ducking-place inside the chapel
To do it on the quiet in warm water,
As if that's any good:
I hope Creasey'll fall in and get drowned.

47.—Ann Bellamy

I shall praise and bless my Creator all my days
For guiding Mr Creasey's hand
To let me have this cottage,
So I can get regular to the Baptist Chapel
To hear the Word.
If it wasn't for my religion I should never have come through,
But He has sustained me with His hand.
I didn't so much mind Jeremiah beating me when he was drunk,
Which was nigh always,
But when he took me to Hordle
Where I couldn't hear the Gospel
It almost broke my heart.
Providence in its wisdom removed him,
And now I am happy at the feet of Jesus.
I earn a few shillings cleaning the chapel,

(And making bulls-eyes)
Sufficient for my needs,
And find a penny for the collection.
When Mr Creasey's father baptized me in the river
I was afraid of the water and all my breath went;
But as he put me under the Spirit descended
And I saw Heaven open.
That vision never leaves me,
And I wouldn't change with the Earl in all his glory.
What will it avail him when he cries for a drop of water?
In the course of nature I shall soon pass on
To join the throng above in adoration,
When my sorrows will be forgotten:
All my hunger, all my tears,
All my troubles vanish like a mist,
And I shall be repaid a thousandfold.
Mrs Lorne left a jelly yesterday
And asked if I didn't hate filling the dirty lamps:
If she only knew!
Serving in the Temple is my delight;
Perhaps I shall do the same up there.

48.—Enoch Winterbourne

Once I was wicked and sung in pubs;
It brought me more drinks than I care to remember;
But since my conversion
The Almighty has seen fit to use my gifts for his service,
And in the Primitive Methodist Tabernacle
We dedicate ourselves to prayer and praise:
Especially the latter.
My heart swells in my throat
When the spirit moves me to strike up one of the old tunes:

Grace! 'tis a charming sound,
Harmonious to the ear. . .
How that rolls and rings and turns the corners
With what Miss Mogg calls fugue and counterpoint
and canon.
No new-fangled jiggety tunes
Like they mince in church without opening their
mouths
Because it wouldn't be genteel,
But a real old-fashioned four-cornered rouser;
And don't we make her bell when we march round the
village,
Me—all unworthy—at the head,
To gather the faithful for service.
Though Jos' Swinton *will* drag—
I beat with my fist to keep him up,
For time is everything.
When Enderby and Coulson with their bass,
Gwinny Mogg the alto, and Louey Atkin the treble
Lead the others in their parts,
And my tenor swells clear over all the rest,
'Tis Heaven opening.
If I could bring Ruston to see the error of his ways
I wouldn't want nothing more never.

CRANBROOK.

Vocal Score.

TREBLE. *In cheerful style.* T. CLARKE (1805).

Grace! 'tis a charming sound, Har - mon - ious to the ear;

ALTO.

Grace! 'tis a charming sound, Har - mon - ious to the ear;

TENOR (8ve lower).

Grace! 'tis a charming sound, Har - mon - ious to the ear;

BASS.

Grace! 'tis a charming sound, Har - mon - ious to the ear;

Heav'n with the ech-o shall re - sound, Heav'n with the

Heav'n with the ech-o shall re - sound, Heav'n with the

Heav'n with the ech - o shall re - sound, Heav'n with the

Heav'n with the ech - o shall re - sound, Heav'n with the

ech - o shall re - sound, And all the earth shall hear, And

ech - o shall re - sound, And all the earth shall

ech - o shall re - sound, And all the earth shall

ech - o shall re - sound, And all the earth shall hear, And

all the earth shall hear, And all the earth shall hear.

hear, And all the earth shall hear, And all the earth shall hear.

hear, And all the earth shall hear, And all the earth shall hear.

all the earth shall hear, And all the earth shall hear.

49.—Noah Creasey, M.P.S.

It's thirteen years since I wedded Lorna Ravell,
And why she left me on the ninth day still bothers my dreams.
That Cornish farmhouse wasn't as lively as Fletton,
But I fancy she felt the cold;
She was thin and small and shivered all the time in bed;
Then—without a word . . .
Leaving me to this rotten business where nobody comes except they're in a hurry
And can't wait to visit the cheating Bly Stores on Saturdays.
(*That's an aeroplane!*)
How can I afford to make a show on five customers a day:
Powders to condition horses, rat-poison for foxes, blood-mixture, and homœopathic pilules for Mrs Dobney;
What a gang!
Not a soul worth a kick now Cullen's gone—
There's Borkman prancing past;
Fancy sleeping with Minnie Harker at half a crown whilst his lawful wife earns twenty pounds in London—
They say she's terribly seductive with her thin legs—
These Fletton girls are either coarse or scraggy and I can't fancy them—
Poor Cullen!
I used to find him on summer evenings on Roundhead Rise
Staring in a maze at the chimneys and spires of Bly;
He said they were like the *Arabian Nights*,
Though what he meant I couldn't rightly guess.
He was always a bit queer
And used to speak of Fletton as if it was a living being:

When any one died he'd say, 'Fletton's lost another tooth,'
And when Tharp went he said, 'Fletton's lost its ear.'
He was too thick with Aaron, who I didn't fancy—
Though they made a good pair:
One thin, pale, and spectacled, the other short, dark, and bright-eyed.
Sometimes I think Guy was right,
For Fletton thinks of nothing but itself:
Although, so far as I hear, the only time it was ever united was when the Toll Gate was pulled down:
Yet the war doesn't touch it,
And if the rest of England vanished Fletton would go on much the same:
No drugs, of course, nor tea nor sugar,
But they'd not be missed for long.

50.—Tommy Stower

It's grand to have religion!
Look at me, the youngest of eighteen!
Father was only a day-labourer at one-and-ninepence,
But I begun with swapping rabbits
And took to hay and corn.
Being a Wesleyan like so many of the warmest farmers,
One thing worked with another under Providence:
That's the best of Wesleyans,
They're well-to-do and hang together;
The Church are bankrupt and not worth a kick,
While Primitives are mostly labourers,
And the Baptists are too stuck-up.
What if jealous folks call me sharp?
That's only 'coz they're flats:
You have to be sharp or you can't rise.
Aaron Tharp's father left him a beautiful home
And a business second to none;

Now he's a bankrupt wandering fiddler,
While I live in his house with the bow-windows.
He had first chance, too, at Sarah Rowett,
But he let her go and I snapped her.
(I might have done better if I'd waited,
But Rowett's helped me a lot in the business.)
It's a good thing Tharp's gone;
He would always have been slandering me,
Saying I did him out of his home:
Luckily he didn't belong to chapel or church
Nor yet the Golden Cross,
So nobody took no notice of his talk.
I shall marry my little Franky to Woolerton's Molly;
They'll have a good share of land between them
And will be able to get up among the gentry.
Providence looks after its own just as well as the Evil
One—
And sometimes better.

51.—Susan King

Few knows as much about Fletton as me,
For you can't diddle one what goes everywhere—
Even to the Dower House:
A woman that's handy is always welcome.
I can sew, darn, knit, peg hearth-rugs, make quilts,
mend chairs and sofas,
And a hundred odd jobs that keep the pot boiling,
To say nothing of births and deaths.
It's not so much the money or the food,
As the things given you to take away that count.
Although I bear the news from house to house,
I don't tell all I know by a long way.
That Mrs Woolerton with her sealskin jacket and
fancy airs ain't no better than she ought,

And let Doctor Berry rave against women as he may,
It wasn't the death of a relation that took his housekeeper back to London.
I know how Joe Goose stabbed his mate over Widow Harker,
And how Old Blow came to his unusual end,
And my eye's on that cunning Salvationist Captain.
Many's the Christmas-box comes my way,
Both for what I tell and what I don't.
Gwinny Mogg is going to stay with a school-friend in London,
But old Mogg little guesses who that 'friend' is:
I saw her last night where our back lane is shady,
Kissing the young Viscount as fierce as a weasel;
They're all alike, them Moggses!
I can put two and two together right enough;
But when she comes back, innocent as a peach,
I shan't let on;
I don't want turning out of my cottage:
It will keep all right for a rainy day, will that tit-bit.
My Mary, what's the very spit of Sister Martha in America, is getting a likely lass;
She's just gone for housemaid at the Pinions,
And I've learnt her how to look sideways and hold off
(Though not too long);
She's fitted out with stockings and petticoats fit for a princess:
Nothing's usefuller for a girl in service
If the master has plenty of money.

52.—Andrew Longthorne

The air's so bracing in this delightful village
That my health, beaten down by London, is fast recovering,
And I have determined to sell my business, and farm.

OLD ENGLAND

It's the finest life!
The days pass like a dream,
Well-ordered, smooth, regular, and altogether delightful;
With your own milk, butter, fruit, poultry, vegetables,
Game from your gun, pigs fattening in the sty,
And the corn ripening all around:
Nothing to worry you.
Why any one lives in a city I can't imagine.
Of course, there are discontented people everywhere;
There's young Edgerley, the amateur farmer,
Losing his father's fortune as fast as it was made,
But he's a fool and would fail anywhere.
The loyal tenantry are natural and happy,
As you can see on market-day,
Or any evening in the Golden Cross.
I'm going ferreting this afternoon with Mr Bones,
A rough diamond of Nature's best;
Fancy the schoolmistress sending an inspector to summon him:
You can't tame animals by soft words;
She ought to try them on his pedigree stallion—a ramping brute.
Doctor Berry who cured my sciatica,
Is jaundiced and full of complaints.
My niece Georgina—
On whose recommendation I came here—
Says he's no good at all.
He should see our slums!
There aren't any real poor in the country,
And fresh air will beat filtered water any day.
I've always been a good Liberal,
But I should have to reconsider if I lived on the land.
Things are all of a piece here:
Church, Estate, good farming, good sport,
The Golden Cross and its jolly landlord,
Full of old tales,

With a lot of dyspeptic Wesleyans in opposition.
The only thing that makes me doubtful is Emily:
I must talk to her when I get back.

53.—Jackson Challands

What a good thing to have an Earl like ours!
When the bull got father in a corner, Thompson
Rowett rushed off to the Agent,
Offering three pounds five an acre for the farm:
He might have saved his breath, the dirty Radical.
The Agent sent for me,
And said I could have it on the same terms as father
(Twenty-two and sixpence, with rates according):
It shows how a good tenant is valued
When they refuse a thousand a year extra rather than
lose him.
Why should I vote Radical and go to chapel?
I can't find anything as'll suit me better,
And wouldn't swap our old home for all Australia.
Though Bannister Hides may braunge about his
potato-growing,
What suited father suits me, and old-fashioned things
last longest:
We shall be here when them Hideses is forgotten.
Should I be likely to vote for the scarecrow who stands
for the Liberals,
Who knows nothing of land,
And says our labourers should have a pound a day?
As for Chapels!
When I'm married or buried I want it done properly,
Not messed about by Billy Bean or any of the local
preachers.
The Earl likes his sport, but don't he pay for it?
The bit of harm done by game is allowed for in the
rent,

And nobody loves hunting better than me.
The war's made farming almost profitable,
And labour's our only trouble:
They're getting discontented and unreasonable,
Mostly on account of Moller Holmes, Joe Makins,
and young Butler Atkin,
Who ought to be treated the same as poachers.
Directly the war's over the boot'll be on the other leg
And we shall have our own back,
With them on their knees for half a crown a day.
Mr Rowett's sounding me about Vi,
And I must talk to her;
She's a bit in the way now,
Because I shan't marry again:
It's cheaper to buy your milk than keep a cow.

54.—Esau Burrows

Out in the States I was as good as any one,
With a business and three farms,
And never thought to see Fletton again
Until young South ran across me,
When I gave him a job for his father's sake.
He lent me a copy of the old *Chronicle*,
And there I saw some poetry about Blind John Taylor.
I've only cried twice in my life—
The first when Isabel and the baby died—
And why them verses fetched a tear I cannot guess.
They reminded me somehow of father,
And brought everything back again:
The river, the thatched roofs, the trees in the churchyard,
Old Abram Potterton, the churchwarden,
The Cross Roads where we fought the Hordle Roughs,
And the corner where I played at marbles with Johnnie Taylor,

Who lost his sight in the Great Fire of sixty-three.
Folks can be too smart!
Getting money ain't everything,
But here they're just the same as ever;
You know where you have 'em,
They speak their minds and keep their promises;
And there's a lot in that.
Young Stower asked me why I sold up and came back to this cottage,
But I couldn't rightly say.
Stower's a smart lad and will go far;
He caught what Tharp's boy threw away when he took to fiddling:
A lot of good that done him.
Yet I don't rightly cotton to Stower;
He belongs across the water, where they don't mind what you do so long as you get on.
Fletton's not so bad as I used to fancy:
There's worse things than Earls, even if you throw in Daniels and Ferrett and the Agent.
When I was young I was all for change and none to hold you back; but now I'm not so sure:
America may be self-made and fresh, but it's finished rough, and there no join to the flats.
I can't rightly see as Fletton'd be better off if Holmes and Makins and Peg-Leg Jackson owned it;
If some one has to own property, I reckon the bigger the Owner the better.
Mind you, these farms are too large and ought to be cut up to keep the young fellows at home;
But wherever you go there's something could be altered,
And taking it all in all it's where I want to finish.
I'll stroll down now to the Golden Cross
And chat with Harvey about the times when we went to Dame Todd's school.

55.—Henry Woolerton

Emmanuel Broomfield tried to get my Jane
With his loud swagger and braunging ways,
But women know solid worth, and he went on to the Asylum,
Losing me a hundred and sixteen pounds:
The brainless swindling noodle.
Jane had a narrow squeak;
At one time I feared he would get her,
But he was known to be paying to three different women for a child each,
And his housekeeper beginning to look sideways:
He might have married and had bairns much cheaper.
A wonderful woman is Jane!
She may be a little severe sometimes,
And sometimes rather too exacting:
She forgets I'm not like that beefy brute of a Broomfield.
She's just ordered a motor-van
And its price kept me awake all last night.
Terrible foresighted is Jane!
The chapel would do ill without her, and I often wonder she doesn't get into the pulpit.
Only one thing she fears—
That's the Co-operative Society:
If a branch opened here it would be awkward,
Because of their wicked scheme of giving profits to customers,
Invented by Conservatives to ruin honest tradesmen;
Yet I believe that Jane would best them.
Here's Bennington on his tricycle looking all lost—
As well he may!
They shouldn't send us such extremists for candidates;
With anybody but him we could have swept the board,

And there would have been no crack for Cutts to poke
his nose in.
Mr Bennington has quietened down a bit,
But his scheme for a vegetarian farm dished him at the
start—
'No live stock, no farmyard manure, and neither hens
nor dogs'—
I suppose he'd have refused a seat in Noah's ark!
Not that Labour can ever come to anything:
I agree entirely with Luke Fletcher about that,
Only it means Wardle for ever.

56.—Anthony Woods

On my seventh birthday
I stood on the Bridge to watch Farmer South's teams
go by:
Beautiful horses, well-fed and coal-black,
With their brass harness shining in the sun
And coloured caddis in their manes and tails.
I set my teeth and swore I'd have the like,
Cost what it might:
Now I have the like.
I have South's house and farm,
My horses are finer than his, and my barns are full.
All I want is a wife.
Maria Creasey tried hard to wed me once;
But I dodged her.
I've only seen one girl I would marry,
And that's the school-teacher :
Not that little bitch of a Harker,
But Miss Burtonshaw, who came here for her health:
If she would have me I'd give her anything in the
world.
Folks call me tight and hard
But that girl wouldn't.

She's a cut above the women round here,
And I haven't dared to ask her yet.
I've been so busy getting what I wanted that I've never had time to bother about marrying;
Especially as Widow Harker was housekeeper to me for so long—
A clever woman who meant to marry me:
But that's a horse of another colour.
I go to church regular on Sundays
Just to see Miss Burtonshaw in the choir:
She's the most beautiful creature I ever set eyes on,
And I mean to get her.

57.—David Coulson

When I was learning my trade at the pig-killing
Not one cottage in Fletton but had two or three ready,
And the killers worked all Feast-week without ever stopping.
Pigs was pigs in them days;
None of your wankling creatures that slip sideways through the fence,
But good forty-stoners, fit for a king.
Ah! the Feast, the Feast,
How it brings back the smell of fresh pork and the loud cries of dying pigs.
I remember, when I was only *that* high,
Seeing them scraped and pale on the cratches
All clean and white and beautiful,
And I never rested till father 'prenticed me.
Best of all is to kill your own,
What you've fed with your own hand all the year round,
Watching and tending from a grunting sucker to a fair and proper size.

They know you so well, they don't struggle even when
the rope goes round their snout:
After that it doesn't matter what they think;
This knife slips through their gullet slick as butter.
I dream of pigs and carve them in my sleep!
All good things come from them:
Pies tasty from the oven,
Spare-ribs, collard-meat, face, feet, head,
Hams and flitches of bacon for the kitchen baulk
And the scraps from odd corners:
Is there an animal so useful anywhere?

58.—William Bowles

I shouldn't have thought it of Brother Thomas
After all the years and years we lived together,
Working the old farm as partners
With never a wry word passed,
To marry a rich widow older than himself
And break from all the old ways,
Taking up with a woman that's overbearing
And stuck up to the sky with her own importance.
My Jemima's as good as her and a deal usefuller—
To say nothing of looks—
While our twin boys are as lusty as young colts,
And soon may have a sister.
Strong and healthy is Jemima,
She works like three and is always jolly.
I wouldn't swap with Thomas for ten times the money,
Leastways not for more than one day:
I should like to try it once, to see what it's like:
But you can't eat money, nor drink it, nor yet sleep
with it.
Poor Thomas!
He should have married Mary Wilders instead of that
faded Jezebel.

Sister Marion says she paints herself,
Though I don't quite see how she does that
Unless it's underneath her clothes,
Same as you put a dab of tar on a sheep when you cut it in shearing
To keep the flies away.
No! I don't think she paints herself,
It would come off on the bedclothes—
Though Marion's a knowable woman.
Thomas is a gentleman farmer now
And copies everything the Pinions do.
I can manage very well without Mrs Thomas's relations or her garden-parties or her fine manners.
The only thing I can't forgive him is letting his Missis try to trample on Jemima because she was a cook:
What about it?
I lay I've better things to eat than Thomas:
His Missis can't do anything useful,
Not even have a baby:
No wonder he looks more dried up every day.
I'm glad in a way he doesn't come to chapel,
It's so awkward when we meet,
Because we have to pretend there's nothing between us.
That woman's got her claws in him
And he'll never be happy again like we used to be in the old days:
Many pleasant times we had together,
And I can't help wishing somehow that things had been different.

59.—Harry Hemsley

I can't bear it any more!
A grown man of twenty, made a fool of before the men:
How can they be respectful when mother rushes out and contradicts my orders?

She ought to know better;
Never dared she raise her voice before father
Who kept everything in his own hands with a vengeance.
Close as a church was father!
He ought to have trusted me more,
Only I never dare reason with him;
And when he was struck down in the night through eating goose against Doctor Berry's orders
We were completely flummuxed:
Both of us looking as soft as Silly Sam,
Not even knowing how to work a bank account:
Hundreds of pounds we've lost in three months.
To make matters worse he left a will
Making all to mother for her lifetime.
That was a bitter blow!
He should have trusted his only son;
If he'd ever given me a chance I could have shown him.
She's trying to stop me marrying Bessy
Just because the Keys go to church,
But I'm going to have it out to-day;
She must let me have complete charge of the Little Manor
Whilst she stops here in the Three Hundreds.
'Twill be as much as she can manage—
And more—
We'd see in a year's time which farm looked best.
If she won't give way I have another string:
Jack Key says I can raise a couple of thousand on my reversion
And take a farm anywhere,
Then mother will be sorry she drove me out:
The neighbours will cry shame on her.
If only that doddering old fool of a Rowett—
Who father made trustee, nobody knows why—
Wasn't such an ass and backed her up,

She would have agreed to do what I want.
He loves to have his nose in everywhere does Rowett:
Jack Key says he's trustee to lots of widows
And lives on them all.
The other morning I ordered the boy to harness the gig
To call for Bessy and go to the Church Bazaar;
Then mother told the boy she would have the gig herself
And the old market cart would do for me:
Why couldn't she speak to me about it?

60.—Frederick Dobney

I've kept up and kept up and kept up till I can't keep up any longer;
A man gets desperate if he's pushed too far,
And when things come to you in the night it's time to alter.
Oh! how it makes your heart ache
Pretending amongst everybody that you're rich when you're not
And smiling when you're in Hell.
This grand old business, the best in Fletton,
Built up by Grandfather Dobney,
Has been a perfect gold-mine—
But you can empty a gold-mine,
Leastways my family could.
Susan backs up the children and the money flows out at every chink.
I thought after we'd reared and schooled and fixed them—
Herbert and Lizzie and Maud—
(Poor Herbert!)
That I should have peace and quietness for the rest of my days:
Just keep an eye on the shop

And stroll down to the Golden Cross in the evening;
But that's where I made a grand mistake.
Those girls take after their mother
And show off one against another.
They set Herbert's wife off as well, and Susan has to keep pace.
Susan's like all the Key women,
They ruin their husbands, sooner or later.
I never thought I should have to say it
But by God she's ruined me !
I may as well own I'm at the end of my tether,
And if it wasn't for my son-in-law, John Overton, I should be in despair.
Luckily I have him to fall back on;
He's one of the family now and is counted a promising man in Fletton;
Piggy Smithson says he'll go far,
And he knows what he's talking about.
John started with next to nothing and all he touched turned to gold;
He's never looked back
And in ten years' time will be one of our biggest farmers.
He's fond of me, is John;
Many an hour has he spent in my company;
'All he has is mine for the asking,'
That's what he's said to me more than once,
And now's the time to ask.
If I don't get some credit inside four days I'm done for:
I must catch him on Thursday at the Anniversary Tea.

61.—John Overton

All my brothers and sisters spliced up with their own sort,
But I waited a bit and carried off Mr Dobney's daughter:

You can't be too careful who you marry,
It fixes you tight and you never climb after.
I've risen right up the tree;
And now we've got the drawing-room furnished
You might fancy yourself at the Moggs' or the Woolertons';
The fellow what sold it said no better suite could be found in Fletton,
Look where you might from Grange to Manor.
Maud gives tea to visitors on Friday afternoons,
And young Hemsley brought Miss Key to call:
That shows where we stand.
Everybody knows I'm a rising man:
From father's small holding step by step I've grown to a hundred and eighteen acres,
And I'm only thirty-two!
The one difficulty is capital:
So long as I lived with mother at twelve-and-six a week I never looked back;
All I earned and saved went into the land,
And it's wonderful how fast you can grow like that.
I didn't realise what setting up house cost;
Not that I'm sorry;
I wouldn't go back to them low ways for all the land in Fletton.
As Maud says: It's worse than pigs!
But it *is* a pull;
Your hand's always in your pocket,
And that plush suite is going to be the very devil.
The fellow that sold it calls to the day for his instalment;
He looks so grand you daren't offer excuses;
And there's the best bedroom suite still running, to say nothing of the ordinary things.
We didn't really need a best bedroom;
I told Maud so, and wish I'd held out;
It's all very well,

But I'm beginning to look the wrong way round.
Instead of buying bullocks I've had to take some of
    Mr Todd's on agistment,
And though he pays a good price it's not like having
    your own,
Because he gets the profit,
And worst of all the neighbours are bound to know:
They soon begin to point and whisper.
The cash that ought to have gone for bullocks
Lays dead in furniture, paint, baby-clothes, garden
    fences, charwomen, curtains, china services, and
    God knows what:
All earning nothing.
You can't rightly say how the cash *does* go,
It just takes wings
(Like that aeroplane)
And now—
If I must own it to myself—
I'm in a corner.
My only chance is to borrow off Mr Dobney:
I'm in the family and he thinks the world of me;
Not a month ago he said he should help me if ever I
    wanted it,
And that draper's business is a gold-mine.
His children spend all he gives them fast enough—
Herbert, and his prancing wife that made such a show
And has come such a cropper,
And Lizzie who fancies herself because she's engaged
    to young Todd—
Or says she is—
It's them that egg Maud on, blast 'em!
We ought to have waited for that drawing-room suite,
But they all want to best each other,
And certainly we've shown them the way.
Miss Key will never call on Herbert's wife,
Who's cooked her goose!
It's a good thing I have Mr Dobney to fall back on,

Or, to tell the truth, I don't know how I should carry
on till harvest,
Let alone keep up the furniture instalments.
Come what may, I won't agree to a dining-table:
The old one's plenty good enough
And Maud must be ruly.
I'll catch Mr Dobney on Thursday at the Chapel
Anniversary.

62.—Thomas Bowles

You might say a man has no right to worry over trifles,
Yet we are as we are,
And I own that it's made me unhappy.
William is my twin brother and on the old farm
We played and lived and grew up together,
Sharing everything equal,
While father licked us turn by turn about.
When the great day came
That Hepzibah Creasey—old James's third wife—
(Hepzibah Key that was)
Came to be free by reason of somebody leaving the lid
off their well,
And after due approachment and ceremony
Agreed to be mine,
What should William do but rush off and marry a girl
Who'd been in service at the Dower House,
Dragging the respected name of Bowles into the mud
When there was no occasion.
There's no reason to believe she wouldn't have been
accommodating,
But when I tried to help him out,
Offering my services to bargain with the girl,
He got quite vexed and said he'd always wanted to
marry her.
We've always been well thought of, us Bowleses,

So that even James Creasey's widow didn't think herself too grand to marry me:
But now!
If Jemima called 'twould be at the kitchen door
Where she'd be comfortable with her friends.
Not that she's not a likely wench
And anybody would be glad to live with her in the accommodating way;
(Like Tom Bavin)
But Hepzibah can't take her to her arms,
And unfortunately by reason of William being born a few minutes before me,
Jemima thinks she comes before Hepzibah.
I can't forgive him for that!
Of course he'll have a score of brats
And the gutter will be full of little Bowleses bawling their names about;
But that's to be expected:
As Hepzibah says—
These sort of people have no control over themselves.

63.—Mary King

I am so fond of George Barks
And if only mother'd let me we'd get wedded tomorrow:
He's ready to take a married coachman's job,
But mother says we must have money to start on,
And George has never saved a ha'penny.
Mother says I'm young and she'll find the money if we wait six months.
The Missis watches me out of her eye-corners
And I'm afraid of her,
But the Master likes me;
He's tall and thin and sometimes queer
And doesn't look strong.

George says Missis doesn't care a carrot for him;
It may be so!
I was shutting the study window, night before last,
When the Master come up quiet as a mouse and fastened it for me;
He leaned against me with his arm across my shoulder:
Wasn't it kind of him ?
Last night he came in again to help,
Putting his arms right round me to reach the window;
He was shaking as if he had the ague and I was feeling so sorry for him
When all of a sudden he left go the latch and squeezed me terrible;
Then hurried away:
Mother says it will be all right if I do exactly what she tells me.

64.—Widow Hemsley

If it wasn't for Mr Rowett I should go crazy;
But he's so kind and considerate—
And preaches such a beautiful sermon.
If only my James had been like him!
His wife didn't value Mr Rowett a scrap,
(She was only a Winterbourne)
And I don't think he misses her.
The world is very hard on widows;
Everybody bands together to rob them;
And it drives me wild to see myself done and can't stop it,
Whilst on top of all my troubles comes Harry.
Mr Rowett says I have the reins and must be firm.
If I let him marry that Bessy Key she'll drag him off to church and I shall never have authority over him:
She's nine years older than Harry

And ought to get one of her own age—
If she could, the huzzy!
James would turn in his grave at the thought.
Harry is only a child and must be guided;
As Mr Rowett says, he hasn't a penny and must do what he's told,
Only he's tiresome and rude and tries to copy his father by giving orders,
Ignoring his mother altogether:
I shan't stand it:
James was enough in his lifetime.
Those Keys are a bankrupt crew,
Drinking, card-playing, and wild as wild;
If Harry gets into their hands he'll be lost—
Poor misguided boy—
He should trust to his mother.
I wouldn't mind him marrying that genteel Miss Burtonshaw
Who comes from London and is most refined;
She told me that a girl ought to follow her husband,
And though she worships the vicar she wouldn't take Harry from chapel:
If I'd married a man like Mr Rowett I'd have followed him anywhere.

65.—Nathaniel Dodds and Eliza Dodds

Why, Liz! you've caught me in my disabills,
I've not a deal to do but garden now,
Potatoes all look middling in their hills;
That frost last night it missed 'em altogether
And soon there'll be some new ones anyhow.
What brings you over here this time of day?
What say?
Looked in to see if I can stand this weather?
And could I do

With a pat of butter and an egg or two ?
That's kind!
But when you married Bob—my son—I knew—
I told him as I'd lay he'd never find
No better manager not anywhere,
Nor ever could—I'll swear.
So sit down on that stump and rest ye—do—
And put your basket there:
That's it—while I'm a-finishing this row;
That's better . . . so!

Do I mind Jim, your oldest lad ?
That's a nice thing to ask me—
Wasn't he here last Sunday week to tea ?
What's amiss with him then ?
I hope nowt bad ?
Always in mischief them young rascals be,
Either they're in a pond or up a tree.
Nothing wrong ?
I'm glad!
Getting a good stout fellow, is he,
And goes to farm-work regular nowadays ?
That's a fine lad!
You don't want him to grow up on the land,
But otherways ?
A-course you'll please yourself what he'll be doing,
But it's the best and healthiest life a-going,
And if men's treated decent I'll be bound
As you can't beat it, taking things all round.
What's that ?—
The Parson wants him!
Oh! does he ?
I see!
Gardener and groom—
Hoe and broom—
Dear me!
You think 'twill lead to something better some day,

'Coz he's a likely lad!
Why—Liz—the first one always is!
You feel as this would be the likeliest way:
Two decent suits of clothes a year
And drive the pony everywhere;
Two bob a day—providing—
It's no use hiding—
He goes to Church on Sundays regular—Eh ?
You think as this may be a lifetime's chance
And feared of me a-standing in his way.
A-course you'll think as me what built yon chapel
Will put it front of him—
Your Jim!
No doubt you do;
He belongs to you;
But it's not the matter of one boy less at chapel:
There's evil deeds, there's wickedness, and worse;
There's a curse!
You ask why can't I let bygones be bygones ?
I will—
When them what did the wickedness and evil,
What profited by backing of the devil
Has cleansed theirselves,
Repented—aye !—and made it good again
To the weak and the poor:
Then I'll forget—but not before !
Nobody couldn't what's been through Hell!
You know, my girl—
'Tis better now, although you can remember
When you was married, many years ago,
When things was pretty low.
I know what living meant to you
With bairns and all the work to do,
The house to keep, the rent to pay,
On wages not two bob a day;
You and the children lived on . . . what ?
On bread and water!

. . . It's gone, you say ?
No matter—Eh ?—
Things is better, a lot ?
Old Challands what paid our starving wage,
He died last year at a ripe old age,
And it was found
He'd raked together forty thousand pound;
All off the land—
Not by his own hand—
That Church supporter, that parson's friend
(What blessed his end)
But by ours, what lived on the bread of shame.
Now . . . tell me, when yon Parson came
And found himself, how matters stood,
Did he sing out for Challands' blood ?
Did he stand up in church and say
As Hell would be his certain pay?
Or did he give the Agent a verse
For letting us live in pigstyes and worse ?
It wasn't his affair ?
It was!
He's paid for it, three hundred pounds a year;
He's paid, paid handsome for to help the poor,
What's at his door:
But did he ?
No fear !
Never no backing for us, anywhere.

That's natural ?
A-course it be!
He hangs to his own does Parson and so must we.
I've had it all before, my dear,
In Norfolk in yon wicked Shire—
When I was young 'twas ten times worse;
I never mind it without a curse.
But it got too bad at last to bear
And we tried to begin a Union there

To bind us together to help ourselves,
To help each other, one with another,
Not to be starved in styes and dens;
Not bread and water, but proper food;
To live like human beings should.

It never was done!
We'd hardly begun
When up got the farmers all on fire
Afeard of wages jumping higher;
Up rose the squires red and sweating
For fear as we should soon be getting—
Us wicked Radicals—in bands
To seize the power from their hands;
Up got the Parsons savage and cold,
Afeard as we should be too bold.
They smashed us beaten to the ground,
Our breath all gone and never a sound;
They ran together and licked us well,
They kicked us savage where we fell;
Turned us adrift into the road—
'*Rebels must reap what they have sowed*'—
Our parson said;
He's long since dead:
If any man's in Hell he's there,
Or, if he isn't, God ain't fair.
Too strong they was for us, them Three,
It was hardly play to them, you see.
We hadn't the money to roam afield
And look for work, so we had to yield.
We couldn't watch our children pine,
So our Union died and left no sign.
As that Parson said—
What's long since dead,
And now in Hell, a burning well—
We had to reap what we had sown;
'Twas the wrongest victory ever known,

And they'll have to reap what they have sown.
They'll pay for it yet if the Bible be true,
Squire and Farmer and Parson too:
For all must pay for the evil they do.
To help the poor the Church should be first;
Of them Three in their evil the Parsons was worst;
By our widows and orphans them Parsons was cursed,

Who says as Britons never shall be slaves
He meant the rich or else he only raves.
They stamped our Union to the ground them Three,
Them what I call the Devil's Trinity;
They marked for mischief all our men what led,
Their wives and children had to cry for bread;
But I was single then and hard to beat;
I didn't mean to lick yon Parson's feet.
(He'd lick mine for a drop of water now,
But he wouldn't never get it anyhow)
I came to Fletton Village where men are free—
Leastways they was to what I'd left, you see;
We had to fight a-course, on every hand
For long enough, to get a bit of land:
Just half a rood to build our chapel on,
But when the old Earl died them days was gone.
The young Earl didn't care and let us in
In spite of all old Parson's threatening.
We got the land and soon began to build,
A penny at a time, a brick at a time,
We managed it all as Providence willed:
So up she went till we got her done
And then our hymns of praise begun.

Old Parson clashed his teeth to hear it—
We sung so loud he couldn't bear it.
This new chap's in his robe a-preaching
With crosses and altars and holy days
And bairns to follow the organ's screeching—

As if the Almighty wanted such ways!
We sing and pray, we all rejoice,
We shout with all our heart and voice:
We could in Church if we'd a mind ?
Ah! but, you'll find
As churches is only for them Three:
They're not the place for you and me,
But for them Three and for their kind,
For all what run and suck behind.
If we still went to Church to pray,
We should still be getting two bob a day,
Submitting ourselves to rank and age
And gratefully taking a starving wage,
Helped out with charity—
Damn their charity!
We're not beggars, we're honest men.
But that's not their scheme, nor ever has been.
How does it go ?
You know,—
'*God bless the Squire and his relations*
And keep us in our proper stations.'
They think as we shall bolt that raw:
That's what their precious Church is for.
They're all for God, that God of theirs
Who smiles and listens to their prayers.
But there's a different One on high
Who hears the poor and needy cry,
Who comes to help them in distress
Because he loves the fatherless.
Our chapel God, He doesn't smile
Upon yon Three who fatten while
The poor man's children pine away:
He'll mind *them* at the Judgment Day.

But still you reckon bygones should be bygones
In spite of all I say!
Them things is long ago ?

I know—
You'll please yourself when all be done
'Coz he's your son;
But yet, that boy you're going to sell—
What else, then, girl ?
Isn't Parson bidding for his soul
Same as Jack Key out buying a foal ?
Some clothes and food, two bob a day:
A goodish price and all, you say.
But yet this lad here, who can tell,
This favourite son you want to sell,
Might be the one we're waiting for—
The one what's going to save the poor—
To show us how to beat yon Three
And lead us on to victory.
There's plenty of slaves still round about,
Plenty of children going without.
Them Three be bold in other parts,
Mighty and strong, with savage hearts,
Where the labouring folk lay down in fear
Same as we did in yon wicked Shire:
Waiting for some one to come and lead them—
Some one with faith and hope to feed them—
Some one to lift them out of Hell:
It might be this lad you're going to sell.
Why not ? Why not ?
'Twill be some one's lot!
He has my blood in his veins, your son;
Maybe he'll carry the good fight on
So as his name shall be never forgotten.
Yon wicked Three won't win alway—
There'll come a day—
We shall find they're rotten!
So . . . keep him at home; don't sell him now,
Let him stop on the land and follow the plough;
And when the Day of Reckoning comes
With its storm and lightning, its thunder and drums,

When yon Three has to reap what they have sown,
Your boy'll be ready to fight for his own.

66.—Inspector Daniels

It's twenty-one years since Mr Hanbury came to the Old Bank
And me to the Police Station;
We moved in together on a pouring wet day as I well remember.
I didn't expect to stop more than six months,
But although three Superintendents have given orders for my transfer
The Agent got them squared—as well he might;
For the Family would never get another like me:
They might have a Radical with no respect for rank.
I know what's what and keep all smooth,
In consequence of which I have done so well
That when I retire in three years' time I shall be better off than any Superintendent,
And shall be able to rent a little farm.
The Agent's no fool!
He hears what goes on and sees that good work is acknowledged at the proper time:
When Minnie Harker looked like kicking up a fuss over young Lord Fitz,
I dropped a word in season and she shut up like a knife;
I settled Doctor Berry's affair and Emmanuel Broomfield's;
My eye is on the Belgian Socialist and that gallivanting Swift,
And I've warned the Salvation Army fellow about begging in the street.
(I don't know that he isn't up to something worse,
But I shall hear all about it this evening.)

If it hadn't been for me, Fletton would have been a hot-bed of scandal, like Hordle;
As it is, there isn't a more respectable parish anywhere.
Sometimes the Family are careless:
Mr Coote *will* ride his cycle on the footpath and doesn't stop when he sees me coming;
He ought to have sense to know there is always some one behind a hedge or on a stack.
Things aren't what they were in Fletton;
Atkin and Moller Holmes and Makins are upsetting everything;
They're not respectful and always ready to chunter,
So that I shall have to serve a summons on Mr Coote:
I daren't send my fool of a constable;
I'll take it round myself to-night and explain.

67.—Mrs Tommy Stower

I was terrified of this house at first,
But you soon get used to anything,
And Tom's a rare hand at managing;
It's lucky he is—
Or we should be in a queer way with the terrible expense of this place.
No wonder young Tharp couldn't keep it going!
He was such a nice lad with soft brown eyes,
Always dreaming and humming to himself;
He wasn't half as cut up as you'd have thought at being turned out of the old home.
I asked him on the Sale-day and he said he was glad to be clear of Fletton:
Of course that was put on—
Then he said, 'Fletton may alter it's tune some day'—
Whatever that meant.
I mended his waistcoat and would have done more for him only father drove into the yard,

And he couldn't a'bear young Aaron.
You have to fuss father up all roads or life isn't worth living.
I wish our house wasn't quite so handy for him;
He walks in with his muddy boots and takes up all the fire
Till Tom can hardly keep from bursting out,
And I catch it when father's gone.
I know now why mother looked so miserable;
He used to play the fiddle to her and read her his poetry:
I don't know which is worse.

68.—Alexander Barley

If you were a market-gardener in a place like this and kept all sorts of poultry,
Geese, ducks, and turkeys, to say nothing of bantams,
With a pride in your pedigree stock,
Taking prizes at flower-shows for miles around;
And if in spite of dogs and wire-netting and all possible care
The vermin preserved by the Agent ravaged you like they do me,
Creeping in at the smallest holes and biting the Aylesbury's heads off
Or snapping up the finest Orpingtons;
And if you were threatened with turning out of house and home if you laid so much as the smallest trap,
To say nothing of shooting the brutes;
And if you couldn't get poison from Noah Creasey without having to sign your name—
What should you do ?
Herbert Dobney offers me compensation at market rates,

As if that was any use:
My birds are worth three of ordinary sorts;
Besides, I don't want compensation;
I want to rear and breed and win prizes.
What right have they to preserve foxes for sport when there's a war on?
Ain't my business as important as their fun?
To threaten me as they do ain't English;
But a man can be over-driven:
Dolph Swift, who isn't such a noodle as he looks, gave me a tip:
I've got an air-gun coming from London, with a folding barrel, to fire heavy bullets,
And the next of them poisonous beasts as creeps along will get something to think about.

69.—Cobbler George Goose

They say as cobblers is always Radicals:
I don't know why!
I've been to church for eight and forty years
And I'm no Radical,
Any more'n my wicked old Dad
What ought to have been in his grave long ago,
Or Saddler Jordan who works in leather, just the same as me.
It's true my trade makes a man thoughtful;
I sit and work and think while folk drop in for a game of draughts or a chat,
Or the latest about young Edgerley;
So that I hear all that goes on in Fletton.
Nothing happens but comes to my ears,
(Something's in the wind for to-night, but I haven't heard the details yet.)
And when I walk home and see the lights in the windows,

I often wonder if folks inside guess how much I know
about them.
(I've got my own idea why Japhet Ruston daren't
cross the Roan Bridge.)
Swift called yesterday with his narrow-toed patents;
(Just like a woman's)
Little he dreams what I've heard of his goings-on!
Old Dobney may step by with his nose in the air
But he lives on money borrowed from his son-in-law;
Dobney's missis wears her shoes down at the heels
quicker'n anybody:
Slipshod she is for all her fine feathers,
And that sort always come to grief sooner or later.
In the old Earl's time my old master made all the
gear for the Towers—
Good honest stuff that never wore out—
Now they want Yankee goods,
Which makes me feel the Family won't last:
It's a breaking up of the old ways.
I've given Parson a fair warning;
He came hinting that I didn't fit him properly,
And I told him straight I should join the Methodists.

70.—Samuel Waddy

I was getting on nice and quiet,
Well in with the Agent and nothing to bother me,
Because every one knows I've no connection with
Uncle Jonathan
Who's touched in the head and not responsible,
When who should drop out of the clouds but Cousin
David's boy, Oliver, to upset everything.
He's gone on shameful all over the place,
Knocking Challands through the Golden Cross win-
dow when they had words:
Everybody knows Challands is over fauce,

But he was such a big ugly chap that nobody stood up to him:
Fancy him being a pulk!
If Oliver'd stopped at that it wouldn't have mattered,
But he carries on with all the girls and most of the women,
Insults the Family, blackguards the Agent, and outfaces Inspector Daniels,
Bringing shame on the name of Waddy.
The worst of it is he will come to the Toft;
If it wasn't for that I could disown him;
Only he's got round Marion and what I say goes for nothing.
She's like all the Bowleses, headstrong and masterful,
And I've come to the end of my patience.
He was sitting last night by the kitchen fire with one of my cigars stuck in his mouth,
And that low-lived Atkins t'other side,
Plotting how to raise my labourers' wages.
I can't stand it any longer,
And as sure as my name's Waddy I shall speak to him to-morrow:
Marion can do her worst, but I shall tell him what I think—
Unless he's very careful.

71.—Fred Overton

Moller Holmes and that lot are full of talk about their Union raising wages;
They asked me to join, and said I should be Chairman,
But I can earn all I want in less time than any of them
By taking on jobs at piece-work and getting a gang together,
Lifting a field of potatoes or cleaning out dykes.

Tom Bavin and me did the river last summer from
Fletton Bridge to Frogs Island,
And I got a nest egg of eighty-six quid put by for
the winter.
What call have I to join Moller Holmes's Union ?
Them fellows haven't sense to come in when it rains;
I should look well telling them all I've learned,
'Coz if they knew as much as me I shouldn't get any
plums.
The Agent's promised me the first offer of the Estate
drainage,
And if all goes well I ought to clear nigh a hundred
profit,
After which I'm for a small holding.
My Emmie's a rare hand at poultry and the two boys
is ready to help;
I shall go ahead like Brother John;
Only I shan't fool my cash away as he's done on show;
Nor make an ass of myself like Bill,
Who hadn't the sense to be carefuller.
A bit of land is what I want:
As I told Jesse Munks when he asked me to promise
my vote for Cutts—
Saying as the Labour Party would take Fletton from
the Earl
And cut it up into small holdings under the County
Council—
I don't want no Council Holding.
Look at Hiram Jorkins, Smith Rook and Rufus
Oldfield with a Committee over them
Who've neither guts nor grace, and make no allowance
in a bad year.
If Bob Cutts promised me forty acres for my own he'd
be talking,
And not a soul in Fletton wouldn't vote for him on
that lay.

72.—Josiah Swinton

I can't cut the big Chestnut down because the Agent
    won't let me,
Spite of all my powerful arguments,
And lightning never comes a'nigh it.
It's the curse of my life:
Never a week passes but some fool looks in at the
    forge and asks if I'm the one the poem was writ
    about.
Mr Coote mooned in this morning and began to recite
    it—
After calling me his worthy smith—
Before he got far I managed a few sparks in his direc-
    tion
And he hurried off without starting the second verse:
The next man that mentions 'Under a spreading
    chestnut tree' is going to get a red-hot horseshoe
    agen his nose.

73.—Wallace Ruston

There's nothing like variety—
Them as sticks to one pub is as dull as them what only
    sleeps with one woman.
We've got four full-licences in Fletton, to say nothing
    of the off-houses:
All of which have their points:
The company's different at each, and so's the liquor;
You get old-fashioned ale at the Mill Inn where the
    wagoners pull up,
The Golden Cross is high-class and takes in travellers,
The Ship has the best spirits and the warmest farmers,
While the Coach and Horses is all for the new-fangled
    notions:

Being kept by my Uncle Japhet I never go near.
I like the little places most—
Joe Barks, Jeff Sharples, Dave Coulson, Fred Makins,
Seth Jordan, Smith Rook, and Jim Toulson—
The landlords ain't so stuck up and they're a deal
cosier.
Many a pleasant hour have I spent in their low-roofed
parlours,
Playing dominoes or darts or seven-card nap.
When you think you couldn't carry another drop
A walk in the fresh air brings you round again.
They're all glad to see me because I take news from
one to the other;
When Hare Petchell cut his throat I was the first in
every bar but one,
And got more free drinks than ever before or since;
Poor Enoch Winterbourne was with me:
He'd the beautifullest voice for a song you ever
heard,
And never had call to pay for any liquor
(Any more'n young Tharp
Who used to make me cry with his fiddle).
Unfortunately the Methodists got Enoch, and now
he's ruined;
He walks the streets on Sunday as melancholy as that
dead fish Luke Fletcher,
Singing hymns through his nose.
The only thing I have to be careful of when I'm
moving about is not to run into the Missis;
That's the best of the winter, the nights is dark.

73A.—Wallace Ruston (*cont.*)

Song often sung by Mr Ruston (Authorship unknown). The last line of each verse is given by the company in a mysterious whisper.

OLD ENGLAND

As day is done and night draws on
We gather near the fire,
What's rounded up with turfy peat
And keeps a-blazing higher;
And as we sit and warm our feet
The wind roars down the chimney.

It's been a freezing hard all day
With gusts of rain and hail,
And now the snow is whizzling down,
The window's turning pale;
Old Mother Goose has shook her gown:
The wind roars down the chimney.

The firelight is red and free,
The kitchen's snug and warm,
We're resting here contentedly
And wish nobody harm:
God help poor sailors out at sea!
The wind roars down the chimney.

The winter threatens to be hard
'Coz berries all is red,
And every morning in the yard
A-waiting to be fed
Comes robins, and the other birds:
The wind roars down the chimney.

The rabbits and the hares about
Get bolder every day,
There ain't a deal of food to share
Among the lot, I lay;
Our orchard trees is gnawed quite bare:
The wind roars down the chimney.

The fields is raked and scoured clear,
The harvest's finished now,
Our yard is nearly full of stacks,
So you must all allow
As we've a right to gather here:
The wind roars down the chimney.

The eighty stone of pork we've killed
Should stand us for a time,
Our ceiling-baulks is almost filled
With bacon fat and prime;
And all the winter wheat is drilled:
The wind roars down the chimney.

There's lard in bladders, and a clump
Of Christmas puddings round and plump,
Whilst best of all the home-made beer
Comes from the barrel, bright and clear;
We are the boys for right good cheer:
The wind roars down the chimney.

So light your pipe and fill your glass
And settle down again;
The night full pleasantly will pass
In spite of snow or rain;
Forget your troubles one and all,
Forget your grief and pain:
We're happy now, no matter how
The wind roars down the chimney.

74.—Bannister Hides

If the Earl wasn't a doddering old fool,
Or if that ass of an Agent had an ounce of brain,
I could strike a bargain to farm the whole Estate:
Nine thousand acres of the best land in the county:

That would be something like.
I told that 'Hee-Haw' Agent I would either pay the present rental and a third of my net profits
Or take it all over on a twenty years' lease at double the present rental;
You'd have thought by the way he looked at me through his eyeglass, I was offering money for his Missis.
It would have been a great scheme
And I'm the man to carry it out.
I'd have scrapped all these rotten little barns and sheds
And run the whole affair from the Estate Office by telephone,
With Fred Overton as Labour Manager, his brother John as Field-Foreman, Enderby amôngst the implements, and Tommy Stower at market, buying and selling:
We could have cleared ten pounds an acre profit every year,
And shown the great Mullens that they don't know everything.
Just fancy all that being missed because an old idiot can't give up his grandfather's ways:
I would make him a millionaire if he'd let me;
We should improve the value of the Estate by our better farming,
To say nothing of the increased rental.
He's short enough of cash anyhow:
His missis spends it by bucketsful, they say;
While the nation's the poorer because of that gang of boozers that call themselves Tenantry,
Like the Danes, the Todds, Old Woods, and that fool Pinion,
Who've got their farms for seven hundred to a thousand a year less than they're worth in the open market,

And only just make ends meet at that
(Except Anthony Dane who's saved by his pedigree stock).
Old-fashioned ways are good enough for them
With three sacks of wheat and three tons of potatoes to the acre
Down Fletton Fen where the soil is six feet thick and so rich you might eat it;
Oh! it makes me wild—
Specially when there's a War on and all the food is wanted—
To see those pets of the Agent lolling at the public-house bars
Or driving to Bly four days a week to kill time;
They couldn't stand against me ten minutes if there was a fair field.
If the Radicals would rid us of landlords I'd move heaven and earth to get Bennington in,
But Lord Blinkhorn of Bly was a Rad,
And now he's worse than our Earl about the game;
While these Labour fellows talk just as soft the other way round.
Nobody seems to have any sense over Land.
The poor Missis used to have an idea that if I could get somebody to talk to the Countess
And let it be known to her that she might have another ten thousand a year from Fletton,
I should get what I want:
It might be so!
She was a knowing woman, was Bertha—
Like all the Hemsleys—
It was her that first thought of marrying our lad to Smithson's daughter.
I've sounded him several times lately
And though he's very fly—

And holds off—
I reckon I've landed him at last:
There won't be such a family as the Hideses anywhere about.

75.—Bessie Key

Mother can say what she likes,
But I've got my own ideas and mean to carry them out:
The Hemsleys may be Chapel
But once we're married one of them is going to be Church
(If Aunt Hepzibah did it, I can).
I shall have the Little Manor drawing-room completely refurnished
And his mother can take her mahogany away.
When I am ready to begin my At Homes
I shall cut out all the Fletton tradespeople—
The Woolertons and Fletchers—
And in time I may get Harry to dress for dinner like the Edgerleys.
(I do like that woman's style,
But she's too stuck up for anything.)
Aunt Dobney's a cat!
She tried to get Harry away from me for her daughter Lizzie,
Who looks like a bag of beans tied loose in the middle.
If I'm very select Mrs Lorne will approve when she calls,
And sooner or later will take me to one of the Committee-teas at the Dower House.
I was introduced to the Vicar's sister—Mrs Honeycomb-Catt—yesterday,
Won't Annie Hicks and Maud Overton and Vi Challands be jealous!

76.—Luke Fletcher

The news is so disquieting that I must get hold of
Mr Bennington;
If that fellow Cutts is standing for Labour it will be
very awkward;
We were almost certain of winning otherwise,
And the Tories would have had a sad shock
After holding the seat for nearly forty years.
The War improved our chances immensely
By knocking that silly Land Campaign on the head.
I've neglected my business this last twelve months,
Addressing meetings or holding the chair for Mr B.
It's true that most of my customers come in the
evening,
But all the same I've worked very hard for the Cause.
If Mr B. doesn't get in I shall never be a J.P.
(Like Solomon Dane)
Because the Family have their knife in me,
And so long as they're in power will never give way.
It's the dream of my life to sit on the Bench:
One day—who knows—I might rise to be Chairman,
Giving decisions in an authoritative voice after whis-
pered bendings to right and left,
Where respectful supporters flank you:
A great position in the County.

77.—Mary Wilders

When I'm running over the Voluntary that Aaron
Tharp wrote for the organ and gave me,
On condition I played Bach instead of Mendelssohn,
Much against my will—
Bach's all dry twiddley runs and no music except some-
times in the very last chord,

Whilst Mendelssohn is pure melody and had such a sweet face—
As I was saying, when I'm running over his Prelude
I shut my eyes and float away into the clouds:
Heaven must be like that—only more so—and no coming back with a jerk.
Fletton is very dull,
And I've passed my thirty-seventh birthday.
If only Tom Bowles hadn't been a born idiot all would have been well;
I should have made him a far better wife than that woman
Who is old enough to be his mother
And barren, of course:
Fancy holding *that* in your arms in the morning light!
I lay he never enjoys his breakfast.
I shouldn't have dragged him from Chapel and broken up the family,
And he wouldn't have looked miserable at heart
Like he does when he goes past our shop:
If he wasn't such a pulk he would clear right off now,
And take me with him.
If he doesn't I shall have to look round:
There's several widowers in the village
And I always liked Jackson Challands,
To say nothing of Nevil Dane and Arthur Mogg.

78.—Abel Sneath

What a fool I was to be over-persuaded,
But they cawed like a thousand rooks till I was deafened
And gave up the old farm to Bannister Hides:
It's true I couldn't pretend to keep the house up,

But who could, after Charles Pinion,
Who lived like a second Earl ?
It's all very well for Martha to talk about the cash in hand:
What's cash if you can't turn it into stock ?
Besides which when I'd paid everybody and took this shop there was precious little left.
Hides will drive me scranny before he's done;
He's turning everything upside down and goes on like a madman;
You can overdo this craze for machinery, *I* say,
And some day he'll come a cropper:
I may not live to see it, but others will.
He's done away with horses, of course,
And he'll soon have no labourers either,
But only machines worked by pressing buttons in the Manor.
The few men he has now are engineers from Bly
Who never stop to pass the time of day.
I expect that dratted aeroplane belongs to him.
There's only one job they can't do by steam—thank God!
That's tending the live stock.
I was chatting with Obadiah Hodgson yesterday as he was mending the road,
(A good man, Obadiah),
When I saw Shep Dawson trying to get a foundered ewe out of that cross drain—
It always was boggy—
So I slipped my coat off and was helping him out
When who should come across the meadow but Hides in a Yankee car:
He gave me a nod as if he wanted to be friendly,
But I couldn't talk to a man that drives motors across his farm.

79.—Curtis Fullerton

I crept out at half-past four to catch those damned rabbits
But only got one little runt the size of a mouse,
While all the rest bolted back into Long Wood,
Their bellies full of my corn, blast 'em!
Just because I have a farm that isn't on the Estate,
Which runs up three sides of me with Long and Round Woods,
I suffer worse than I can tell with the game,
But receive no compensation as the tenants do.
Look at young Todd across the way,
Only paying sixteen shillings rent for exactly the same sort of land as mine,
That cost me forty-two and sixpence.
What's worse, you're rated on your rental,
So that I pay three times more rates than Todd.
There's something very wrong about that:
But they all hang together over the Land Question,
And a fellow like me hasn't a chance.
What I complain of is their keeping it in such a close ring.
When old Watson died I bid the Agent for his farm,
Offering two pounds an acre—grass and arable—
He looked down his nose and said it was promised to the son of an old tenant,
Which was a lie, because George Todd didn't know a word about it till a week later,
When it was given to him at sixteen shillings:
A present of nearly seven hundred a year for being the son of an old tenant.
I was just as ready to vote straight and touch my cap to the Family
Or keep down poachers and Labour Unions as George Todd;

But I'm a Baptist!
Meantime the game's ruining me:
The Woods swarm with birds, rabbits, and keepers—
To say nothing of wood-pigeons—
And when I went to Lawyer Ferrett about the rabbits,
All the comfort I got was that whilst they're on my land they're mine if I detains 'em.
That'a fat lot of good!
You wouldn't think there was a War on,
Or the Government was clamouring for us farmers to save the country,
When for walking across my new-drilled peas
And finding pheasants as thick as crows
And losing my temper and shooting one
I was fined five pounds at Quarter-Sessions.

80.—Violet Challands

If it wasn't that I might have been like Jane Smithson
I could sometimes wish I'd never been to Eastbourne
Because everything seems so common now;
Dad *will* eat with his knife like any labourer;
Indeed there's nothing to tell him from one
Except his bullying ways.
Nobody has outfaced him since mother died,
And when that handsome Oliver Waddy gave him a black eye
And a lump as big as a pigeon's egg,
He was as quiet as a mouse for nearly two days.
Arthur Mogg thinks I've been so well educated that I look down on him
And makes the silliest excuses to rush off when I stop him in the road:
I keep hoping Bannister Hides will make him jealous.
Dad wants me to marry old Woods,
But *he's* after Miss Burtonshaw,

The stuck-up, putty-faced thing
Who screams at the sight of a dead rat.
When I first came home I gave Mr Rowett the glad eye
And he's followed me about ever since;
I know he means to kiss me,
And when he tries I shall give him such a slap.
If I could get Dad to have the front garden kept decent
The house wouldn't look so awful;
But he swears so when I ask him for a man from the farm:
He could easy spare Robb Dodds who's only a cripple.
I'm off now to take a lesson in driving our new car;
The man that's brought it from Bly is stopping a few days,
And he's quite nice when he washes his hands.
(I shall go shopping in Bly every day!)
P'raps we shall meet Lord Fitz:
I know he wants to speak.

81.—Ann Cutts

If that nurse comes poking round Paradise Row again
She'll get something she doesn't fancy.
There's nothing the matter with me,
And I told her to mind her own business;
Just fancy her wanting me to let her have some of my blood in a bottle!
I'd a scare yesterday when I thought I'd lost grandmother's ring
What hangs round my neck on a bootlace;
The knot must have come undone;
But I found it under the dresser in the milk-jug:
It's all I've got to show who we are
(Brother Bob always tried to get it from me).

I was christened Angelica Cutts but Granddad's name
was Coote,
His father being the Earl—as was then—
And I ought to have a farm of my own to leave to my
Joe.
If it comes to that, his own father ought to do some-
thing for him,
Only I don't rightly know if it was Broomfield or
Rowett.
He's doing well in the Agent's office
And might rise to anything—
He's that clever—
Look at all the news he sends to the *Chronicle* every week,
Written out of his own head:
He has his Uncle Sam's brains as well as his own.
I ought to have a pension from the Estate:
Fifteen shillings a week would be very nice,
Seeing I'm not so good-looking as I was ten years ago
And can't earn money in so many ways.
For all that I could have Parson off his perch any
time he calls,
Only I daren't risk losing my Xmas coal and blankets:
His Missis has her long nose everywhere and hears
too much,
And Harriett Holmes is always watching.
But a pension is my right:
I set to work once to get it
When Daniels came and bullied me so—
The loud-voiced brute—
That I've never tried since.

82.—Walter Jackson

If somebody doesn't take that old witch by the scruff
of her neck and strangle her
I shall have to ask to be put on another job

And give up the gamekeeping altogether.
Just because I made a few innocent inquiries about a hare
Said to be hanging in her larder at the wrong time of year,
She gave me one of her nasty looks.
'Don't step in my shadow,' she says, in her horrible voice
'Or you might see things you don't care about,'
And ever since that day I've been queer.
It's no joke for a man as does night work in these woods if he loses his nerve;
You never know what may be about;
And if you begin to fancy things are leaning out of the branches to snatch,
Or lying under bushes to grab you by the ankle,
Or if you wake up in your cottage all of a lather from horrible dreams,
You'd be scared!
That damned old hag squints at me out of her eye-corners as she sits in her doorway pretending to knit
Till I shall do something desperate to her.
I went to Doctor Berry, but he's a fool;
He said all I wanted was a dose of jalop and less gin:
When you're bothered in your mind little things work on you as you wouldn't notice other times.
That sneaking Fullerton's at his tricks again;
The Baptists ducked him last Sunday, and I wish they'd kept him under;
He lays a trail of maize from our hedge right out into his meadow
To get my birds away from the Wood.
He's took a game-licence for himself and his lurching boy,
While all his labourers have gun-licences—
They're nothing but a gang of poachers from Hordle,

But I can't touch 'em unless they cross our hedge;
While these two plough-boys from Pantacks that call themselves under-keepers
Are about as much use as my two boots.
Then there's George Barks and Cousin Peg-Leg, and Alec Barley always cawing about his mangy pullets:
He lives on the compensation we pay him,
Yet he ain't satisfied:
I know he lays poison for the foxes but I can't prove it—yet—
Though we've inquired of every chemist in Bly.
(Noah Creasey would like to, but daren't.)
He gave me a saucy look in the barber's last Saturday
As if he's something up his sleeve:
He'd better be careful;
We always nab them chaps at the finish.

83.—Betty Williamson

Mogg comes past my door every Sunday morning
Singing hymns about forgiving your enemies,
But I'm all for paying 'em out first
And let them have a chance to forgive *you*.
I'll larn 'em to say things agen me!
When anybody treads on my toes I feel as spiteful as a cat.
If folks thinks you can do things to 'em it's just the same as if you could.
After Parson preached about me—
Nine years ago come the twenty-third of the month—
On account of Jos Swinton losing his eye from a spark after we'd had words
And I'd told him to ' mind his eye '—
I let it be known as he'd get paid for it sooner or later:
And he's never had a child to his name.

There's many think Japhet Ruston daren't cross the
Bridge because I've laid a spell on him.
Mind you I've a lot of ghostly power from my mother—
Black Bess—
I can cure headaches and other pains like she could,
Although it tires you out,
The power running from your fingers.
Any fool can charm warts
Or put a spell on boys to make 'em fall in love,
And farmers come for something to keep swine-fever
or strangles away;
But the real business is letting folk think you can do
whatever you want.
Many's the present left at my back doorstep,
And I can scratch a better living in my old age than
either of my daughters—
Who take after their fathers—
By sitting at the front door with a stocking on my knee
And one eye on the street.

84.—Jeff Sharples

There used to be worse lives than a carrier's
When you'd plenty of passengers and parcels to Bly
market;
So long as your horses didn't begin to cough or start
splints
Or get stones in their feet or fall down and break their
knees
Or your wagon-wheels didn't come loose or get
wrenched off in the ruts
Or market-merry farmers didn't smash into you when
they galloped past with loose reins
Or the fog didn't come so thick across Hordle Waste
that you had to walk at the horses' heads,
And there was no competition.

But things aren't what they was:
Them motors have spoilt everything.
Tommy Stower's standing for the County Council next year
And always takes half a dozen farmers or their wives to market;
The police ought to stop him;
But Daniels hangs to them as has money.
Folks complain that I don't pull out for 'em, he says:
Mebbe they think I'm going to drive home from Bly on the slope of the road,
With one wheel in the ditch,
So as they can do the eight miles in twelve minutes.
Morton Enderby tells me Stower's going to have seats fitted on his new motor-lorry
And run to Bly every Tuesday and Saturday:
I shall draw up on the Old Bridge to wait for him
And keep slap in front all the way.
If I could get a little place like Hiram Jorkins
I'd let somebody else have my van;
Anybody could cut Thomson out—
Even my fool of a brother.
Liz says she hears he's minded to give the Mill up.
I must remember to get her medicine at the drug store;
She hasn't been well the last fortnight
Ever since she called at her Dad's cottage and caught that Salvation Army chap in bed with her sister Laura—
I'll wring his bloody neck if I catch him.

85.—Blind Johnny

(This poem was sent anonymously to the *Bly Chronicle* and published there. It seems certain that it must have been written in Fletton and has been attributed both to Aaron Tharp and Guy Cullen.)

He stepped inside the barber's shop
With hardly strength to go,
And painfully across the floor
Went creeping, weak and slow.

'Do try an orange, Mester,
They're good and cheap to-day;
I've selled no end this morning;
You'll find 'em nice, I lay.'

His failing arms no more could stay
The basket worn and old;
It fell, and swiftly rolled away,
A cataract of gold.

'I'm growing old, 'tis true, my boy,
It bothers me to talk,
But I won't have no Workhouse
As long as I can walk.

I've done my share of honest work
For three-score year and ten,
And now I'm not a-going to shirk
While I can keep mysen.

It's fifty year or mebbe more
Since first I came around
To sing the carols at each door
With merry Christmas sound.

There's nobody could do as well
At carol-singing then:
Bill Bones, Bob Pratt, young Georgy Bell,
Tom Burrows and mysen.

For I could sing in tune, my boy,
And keep as true as owt;

While Georgy Bell did near as well:
We never missed a note!

But now of all what used to sing
There's no one left but me,
And I'm not fit for anything;
I'm growing old, you see!'

. . . . .

They took him to the workhouse
He feared as much as hell,
But p'raps in dreams he goes again
His oranges to sell,
Or p'raps to roam a-carolling
The tunes he loved so well
With Burrows, Pratt, and Billy Bones,
And poor old Georgy Bell.

86.—Tom Bavin and Leah Williamson

Tom! Tom! What d'you think?
I've had the Parson's wife
The first time in her life across our door!

What for?

Why, Tom, you'd never guess,
Not if you lived as old as Grammer Bess,
Who—mother swore—
Was a hundred and four:
She wants us two to go off and get spliced.

Oh, Christ! The cow!

You well may swear
At why she dare, and how.

Just light your pipe—it's there—
Now you look comfortable—so—
You're rough, old Tom, I know,
And black as a crow,
But I'm fond of you, lad,
And whether I'm good or bad
You've been main good to me.

But—blast her silly eyes!
What did you say to her then?

I said a lot!
I told her what!
A-coming here with her fancy airs,
Her what has never known no cares,
Looking that wise
Just 'coz she catched a Parson
(Her brother ran away to sea
And took to blue-water
With their old cook's daughter):
You talk of Sin and Shame, I says, to me!
You talk like a fool or a bairn at school
'Coz nobody about
Could ever doubt
But what we're happy together, him and me.
Just look, I says, at any in this street,
What couple can you find about to beat
My Tom and me what's been together years—
Happy and comfortable—
Never no serious trouble—
Nothing, I mean, to set us by the ears:
Good reason why
I says, says I,
'Coz we're a free and equal pair;
We've got to treat each other fair
Or else we part.

Well said now Missis ; that were smart.

' Part,' she says, a-looking down her nose,
' How could you leave this home with children here ?'
I says, says I, that doesn't bother me,
'Coz I can earn enough for food and clothes,
I can maintain 'em by myself, says I;
I'd manage somehow if I had to do,
I'm not a slave to any man—like you.

You didn't. Come !

I meant it too.
If your man turns up stunt, says I,
You can't go off and let him fly,
You can't maintain yourself—not you;
You don't know how to bake or wash;
If your man drinks or starts to thrash
  You couldn't leave him, 'coz he holds you,
You're tied by law and friends what scolds you,
You ain't like me;
I'm free as air,
I'm not afraid, whoever stare.

You gave her the rough of your tongue, old girl ;
But—what a sell !

Coming here to ride rough-shod
'Coz she's a ' wife,'
Why—bless my life
She doesn't rightly know she's born;
She couldn't scratch for her own corn;
I sent her off with a flea in her ear,
And will again if she dare come near;
But she won't in a hurry, the white-faced critter,
With a nose like a knife and a smile that bitter
As if she would kill.

Setting up for a wife!
What does she know about life?
Nowt—nor ever will.
To-morrow's Sunday and we'll go to Church—

What?

Just for once together
Like birds of a feather.
We ain't ashamed to show our faces
To them what thinks we be disgraces;
We'll go together, Tom, for sure,
We'll go this once and then no more,
If you be willing—

Ay, lass—I'm willing—
I'll back you up as I've always done
Against Parson's wife or any one;
Ay! against all the country round;
'Coz you're as good as could be found.
And now—old girl—it's almost eight,
Come on—you know we mustn't be late;
Off to the Ship for our glass of ale;
This yarn of yours'll make a fine tale.
What's that?—your bonnet?
All right—be quick—
I'll wait for you against the gate.

87.—Bannister Hides, Junior

I always did enjoy the Feast,
And now I'm eighteen and do a man's work Dad can't
expect to keep me in:
I'm meeting Vi Challands at six;
She says we live like pigs 'coz we have meals in the
kitchen with the servants,

But it's the handiest place.
She's stuck-up since she went to Eastbourne
And reckons we ought to use the Manor properly
Instead of chitting potatoes in the best rooms,
But you must chit potatoes somewhere,
And Dad and me would lose each other in them big chambers.
We've got apples and pears in the attics
And machinery stores fill about ten bedrooms.
Vi thinks if she marries me we shall live here when Dad's gone
With a score of servants and a regiment of gardeners and grooms:
I say nothing because I'm scared she'll take Arthur Mogg, who's always after her;
But we'll see.
I do love the Feast with its lights and three or four lots of music going in your ear
And all the folks from as far as Hordle with their families and dogs;
And the Circus and Pictures and cocoanut-shies and steam-roundabouts and peep-shows and boxing-booths and sweet-stalls;
Serving men and wagoners in their best clothes
And girls that tickle you with feathers and squirt water down your neck.
Not a house in Fletton but hasn't company in Feast week;
Some of them sit down twenty strong for pork-pie teas.
I won eight shillings last night at the shooting-gallery
And spent it (and more) on Vi inside five minutes:
She's got such bright goldy hair and silk stockings with blue garters.
Directly the Feast's over I'm going to talk to Dad about settling me;
He says the Agent's awkward,

But I shouldn't think they'd refuse Dad if he meant it
'Coz every one owns he's the smartest farmer anywhere:
What with our farm here and three outside the Estate
We've seventeen hundred acres of the best,
And more machinery than any score of the neighbours.
If the Agent can't find a place Dad must let me have the Red House—
There's only two of our labourers in it—
And I think Vi's game if Dad'll agree,
Only you're never sure if she means what she says.
She's a regular little devil and knows what's what!
We were trying the new mare to Mr Dane's King Bruce yesterday
And just as he was getting properly to work she walked down the yard as cool as a cucumber,
Never turning a hair but standing to watch the stallion,
While I didn't know which way to turn;
Then asked if I didn't want to come and look at their new motor.
When we went through the shrubbery I gave her such a hug!
Unless Dad does something quickly he may find himself forced;
He thinks he's arranging for me to marry Jennie Smithson
Who I wouldn't be seen dead in a ditch with.

88.—Lena Ambrose

I shall go crazy if this keeps on!
The last fortnight I've hardly had a wink of sleep:
He keeps letting out a bit at a time,
A word or two, and then a snore;
But I've pieced it all together
Except for the names—

He never mentions names—
And though I say ' Yes ' and ' What ' and nudge the pillow
He's just as clunch as when he's awake.
Of course I shouldn't tell anybody,
We might both land in jail for letting out Post Office secrets,
But he might tell me.
It can only be one of two women in Fletton,
I'm sure of *that*—
One of 'em is my sister-in-law, the schoolmaster's wife—
And to-night I shall say their names over and over to see if he gives any sign.

89.—Jack Key

That bloody Australian did a cross on me
But I shall have it out with him again;
I wasn't fit that day:
Next time I shan't touch a drop till I've won.
He thinks because he knows a bruiser or two he can beat anybody,
But muscle and beef must tell,
And after this fist has landed on his jaw his grandfather won't know him,
Nor yet any of the girls he's after.
I've licked all the gipsies that come nigh Fletton
And should have smashed that bastard Waddy
If he hadn't sprung a dirty trick on me before I was rightly ready,
Jumping and dodging about like a monkey:
I'll monkey him!
What call had he to interfere when we was going to ran-tan Herbert Dobney's wife ?
(Unless he'd been there first,

Which is more than likely)
The sooner he's run out of Fletton the better.
He's talking about buying horses and will spoil the market
Which has been all right till now.
You can't buy wrong, 'coz the Government takes all at a profit:
I've cleared twenty-two apiece on three yearlings I got out of that young fool Edgerley,
And should have had Hemsley's if it hadn't been for that interfering Rowett
Who wants them himself.

90.—Isaac Creasey

There ought to be a law against folks letting property down.
They have turned out lazy farmers lately
And that good-for-nothing Thomson should be dealt with,
Letting the finest house in Fletton go to ruin.
He'd be better off in a small place,
But though I've pressed him to change with me
He only laughs.
There will come a day, however, when he can't pay the mortgage interest.
If it was mine I could entertain the visiting pastors:
As Senior Deacon the right is mine,
But I've no room in Ivy Villa, and Dobney takes all.
I must have another chat with Lawyer Ferrett.
Thomson is a child of the Evil One
And scoffs at the righteous in the Golden Cross;
Maybe the Almighty will lose patience and strike him down,
But the wicked have no fears.

There's Frederick Dobney who *will* press for a harmonium:
Whilst I lead the singing no profane instrument shall enter Bethel;
I will have no tampering with the Bible;
Especially as the end of the world is so near.
I have agreed to a Baptistery being built,
Because the old way of immersing candidates in the river
Although according to Divine practice
Is unsuitable to our wintry weather,
And we lost Mrs Watson altogether.
She was ripe and willing to assist us
But didn't—unfortunately—last until the spring:
The ways of Providence are indeed mysterious!
William Bowles the Second Deacon will bend to the women about that harmonium when I am gone.
Meantime Dobney would be better occupied in looking after his business;
I know more than he thinks,
And the time approaches when he will outface me no longer—
The stiff-necked son of Belial!
His name was not written in the book of the Elect:
He and Thomson will burn together.

91.—Emmanuel Creasey

I hardly slept a wink last night,
Which is maybe not unusual for an astronomer:
Perhaps it was the strange familiarity of this low-roofed attic
Where, mother tells me, I was born;
Or the shock of finding the village so amazingly unaltered.

OLD ENGLAND

On my return to take the new appointment,
Coming to see my fond old parent
To whom I owe so much
I find her little changed, and Fletton not at all,
Since as a lad I sought Jupiter's moons through a tube of cardboard.
After the strenuous growth of Western America
Such stagnation is incredible:
When you look into it, Fletton hasn't changed for five hundred years,
And Jacob Harvey could have lived comfortably with any of his ancestors back to King John.
The active vocabulary is about three hundred words—
Mostly of one syllable—
Whilst sentiments and instincts are unaltered since the Heptarchy.
These villagers are vegetables in face and life,
They look like cabbages, talk like cabbages, think, act, and feel like cabbages,
And are as ignorant and brutish as Basutos.
The sky has no wonder for them, the heavens no depth;
For them no Galileo lived, no Newton laboured,
And even my poor achievements are unknown;
They hear I star-gaze and think the moon has 'touched' me,
But however slow the march of Time
Science will reach this Feudal backwater,
Making a clean sweep of cottages, peasants, gentlemen-farmers, game-laws, brainless Earls, and uneconomic-holdings.
Those duck eggs I had for breakfast were delicious;
I wish I could take some back to London with me.

92.—Joe Makins

The War's altered a good many things—
It's altered *me*, by God!—
I used to work from light to dark for Challands,
Monday morning to Saturday night for half a crown
a day,
And lucky if I got two quarts of beer through the week.
They'll find it out, these lazy farmers,
For there's lots my way of thinking now
And we're through with the old game.
Challands tried to bluster me out of the cottage—
Just as if there wasn't a War on—
(There hasn't been for him, except he's richer.)
What did we go to fight for?
I told him what I'd do if he said another word
And he slunk off like a dog:
Once I shouldn't a dared to answer him back.
I earn a dollar when there's a chance, lay off when I
feel like it, and take life easy.
Sarah's all for the old ways and doesn't fancy working
in the fields:
I tell her the women do it in Belgium regular,
But she reckons the Army's ruined me—
Something wanted ruining in Fletton.
What's the good of work?
My old tom cat had a better time than me
And a bloody sight more sense.
Only fools and horses work!
The fried fish and ice cream trade's all right while they
last,
But that's not long.
As for the Army,
It's a fine life in many ways,
And I'm not sure I shan't join up again when my leg's
better:

Provided there ain't a war on always you can't beat
the Army:
Sarah had better mind her one eye.

93.—The Hon. Eustace Kyme

If the rain stops I shall do a round
To try over the idea I got from Fulton—
The Bly professional—
Who has a new cross-grip that seems easy.
Strive as I will my handicap remains at nine,
While Major Scott has gone down to five.
If I hadn't such an incompetent ass for a clerk, I could
get out more often.
I wish Betty would practise with me instead of
mooning about the village:
Her latest craze is wounded soldiers;
She brings them into the garden to give them flowers
And even lessons in the summer house;
She'll find they don't understand her condescension:
Familiarity with the lower classes never pays.
The Countess agrees with me and has always been
careful,
But I'm afraid of Aubrey,
Who is full of revolutionary ideas and capable of any-
thing.
I could almost wish he'd break his neck out hunting,
For Fitz would make a splendid Earl,
And worthily carry out the family traditions.
I receive a deputation this evening to ask for holdings
for returned soldiers;
But I shall put my foot down firmly.
Unfortunately the Government is weak
And has pandered to this fantastic Socialism
Which threatens the foundation of Old England.
Small holdings are a fallacy

(Invented by Radical candidates),
As can be shown from our history:
Five times the Estate has tried them and five times failed;
The peasants start with high hopes,
But lacking capital and staying power are defeated by two bad seasons:
They draw all goodness from the soil,
Living on its accumulated value,
And when they retire the Estate must take over at a loss.
The larger tenant may not get so much return per acre,
But he farms to carry on.
Any fool can succeed (for a time) by exhausting rich soil,
Like those Yankees with their prairies,
Raising wheat twenty years in succession without manuring:
Give me the old-fashioned man who hands his place on to his son.
Small-holders are a pestilential crew,
Neither to bind nor to hold,
Disruptive of Church, State, and the System,
And I don't care either for the other extreme—
The business farmer:
Hides is as turbulent as any peasant and fifty times more dangerous;
He actually wanted to farm the whole Estate,
Turning the Tenantry into the street,
But I soon put him in his place
And he retired abashed:
I shall admit no more of his kidney whilst I hold the reins.
Sometimes I fear he is intriguing still;
For, unfortunately, the Countess is ready to point out that we don't clear two per cent. on our capital value

(It's lucky she doesn't know what land is worth to-day;
We don't show more than one per cent. really).
An Agent's life is full of worry;
There's Mogg and Fullerton and Barley and Benton
And several awkward fellows on our boundary who harass,
To say nothing of invasions of poaching scoundrels from that horrible Hordle.
In spite of all, it's a model Estate,
And a justification of the System:
We tend our people in their daily lives,
We guide and guard them ceaselessly,
We weed and prune and cautiously delete;
And as long as the Owner lives on the land all is well:
It's the Absentee who ruins us.
There's only one trouble—
I have no children—
And seeing that in case of accident Fletton might pass to another Branch,
It is not right that I should have no heir.
If only Betty could be brought to reason I should be happy;
And though I can scarce invade her resolution
It may be said to be the purpose of matrimony,
And many would urge she has no right to withhold herself:
She pleads her health,
But will not consult either Berry or a specialist . . .
There are times when I feel very doubtful.

94.—Jeremiah Lowe

It's a strange thing if you come to look at it;
Folks are born and live here for a century or so
Yet never know anything about the place.
It's a wonderful old village,

Mentioned in the Doomsday Book as Fleyton,
And at different times named Flegton and Flyton,
Here, Parson says, before the Romans.
Since I practically retired from the coal-business,
Having neither kith nor kin to follow me,
I've spent my time finding everything I could about it,
And am minded to write a book.
There's plenty of history.
The Cootes got it from Charles Second;
They say Charles First, but it wasn't:
It was given to one of his whores for a bastard,
And they've kept up the family tradition.
Fletton's full of left-handed Cootes,
There's one in Paradise Row to-day, a worthy descendant of the founder.
Our old church dates from Stephen,
Though, I admit, not much of it,
But the Antiquarians from Bly say the belfry threshold is indisputable.
The Register's full of interesting facts:
Families don't die out here,
Whilst foreigners aren't encouraged.
The Moggs were here in Sixteen-Sixty,
And though Davis swears there's no connection—
His father hearing of Fletton for the first time from a servant-girl—
I have no doubt it's the same lot:
How came he to get a servant from Fletton, anyway?
There's always been an Esau Burrows and a George Jenkins and a Butler Atkins.
The Lowes came in Seventeen-Sixty and can hardly claim to belong to Fletton,
Though my cousin Amelia denies it hotly,
So it scarcely becomes me to write its history:
Yet if there's no one else I suppose I must.
I've been reading about the Enclosing of the Commons

And it's given me a nasty shock;
It was the worst thing ever done in this country,
And the worst thing for it:
However, I will reserve that for my great book.
Fletton's full of place-names—
The Carrs, the Wyche, Stephen's Tower, the Abbey Field,
All have their origin and meaning;
While only yesterday monks wandered through our streets.
It's a relic of Old England,
A living memory, untouched by the city's bustle,
And so long as we keep the railway and telephone away, we're safe.
The dialect is going, unfortunately,
Owing to this craze for education,
And the labourers' children say grarse,
Meaning grass.
It's true some ancient customs are kept up,
Although the schoolboys when they 'beat the bounds' little know the meaning of their game.
I am going now to look at a bottle dug up by Fred Overton,
Who's very fly and thinks it's valuable:
It may be old but I shan't offer him more than two shillings.

95.—Lottie Burrows

Dressmaking isn't what it was—
All the girls rush off to Bly
And buy that cheap and nasty stuff from Gorman's
I wouldn't be seen dead in:
It may be smart but does it last?
Violet Challands has just gone by
Dolled up worse than a peacock with feathers and frills

And showing her legs higher than any decent girl
ought;
Somebody should talk to her father.
You can't get apprentices like you used;
They come for a couple of months and then flounce
away
Thinking they know as much as me;
Why can't they settle down and be contented ?
Mrs Ambrose promised to send one of her three girls
but she never did.
If Lizzie Cook would behave herself I could make
something of her,
But I've too much on hand to be always here.
What with Uncle Esau and Great-Aunt Lowe—
Who worry my life out between them—
I'd as lief be married to Jim Bones,
Who's always nagging at me to look after his six
children.
Great-Aunt Lowe has promised me her furniture
But Jim says it's only fit for firewood;
Besides, she won't die for another ten years
To spite Mr Dobney
Who'd make a cat laugh when he inquires after her.
As for Uncle Esau, I wish he'd stopped in America,
He's that crotchety,
And will soon be in his second childhood.
Nobody knows why he came back to Fletton;
He does nothing but find fault with it all day long,
Or gossip with that horrible Harvey, the publican.
He's going to leave me a fortune, he *says*,
But Jim reckons that tale's been told too often.
If he got a fortune out there, he'd have stopped there;
He's only come home where he can live cheap:
Cousin Tom may have it all and welcome.
Great-Aunt Lowe says I shall be Jim's slave
(She *will* call him ' Cunning ' Jim,
As if he didn't have to be careful),

But I'd rather be a slave in my own house than hers.
He may drink, but he lays that to having no wife,
And I don't believe a word about his beating the last one.
I could keep on as I am, of course,
But what is there to look forward to ?

96.—Maria Creasey

Mrs Woolerton's as heavy as me,
Yet she hardly moves out of her shop
While I'm as active as ever, spite of my two and twenty stone:
If she'd had nineteen children she might begin to talk.
They've all done well, excepting Will who's ailed since the black mare trod on his face,
And little Jacob lost at Ypres.
The Twins (Joel and Amos) would have thriven
But they fell in the water-butt,
And I've never fancied using it since.
It's been a struggle, but Isaac's been very good,
And so was James while he lived:
Give me your own flesh and blood in trouble.
When Jacob came out of prison
(On account of a little misunderstanding with the Oddfellows)
We started him in the butchering, and all the Baptists traded with him:
Many's the joint he's sent for our Sunday dinner before he died of the ague caught in Barkston jail—
Those Oddfellows murdered him and will never thrive.
Us Creaseys are a good old stock,
That's why I married my cousin;
Jacob would never have had that accident if he hadn't wedded a Bones.
I nearly took Anthony Woods instead of poor Jabez;

He was very fond of me, was Anthony, and has kept single ever since:
It shows you what I was, then.
I don't feel any different now except my ankle bothers me on wet days;
That's Daniel Skinner's fault;
He'd no sooner finished our bedroom floor than I put my foot through
And it took six men to get me out again,
While Jabez held a broom under me from below.
All my bairns are here for the Feast
Excepting Walter, who can't get, being in the Civil Service
And working double-tides, account of the War.
Enoch's at school yet,
Adam's apprenticed,
Job has a little place under the County Council,
He married that Dring girl and joined the Wesleyans;
Abel's educated himself by scholarship to be an engineer;
He never gets to the Feast, having four of his own at Newcastle;
But the others come when they can.
Bess is barmaid at Doncaster, Susan's doing well in a shell-factory, Mary's a nurse, and Jane's a cook in Bly:
She *will* try to help me at the Feast,
But I can't do with any one fussing in my kitchen:
I made frummety before she was thought of.
Anne's always here, of course,
Having married Enderby Hicks,
And so is Noah at the chemist's shop
(My poor mad boy, ruined by a foreigner).
The only one I'm doubtful about is Emmanuel, who was always queer;
Instead of scaring crows for Mr Challands's father he

used to measure the sun with thatch-pegs stuck in the ground,
And nearly died of bronchitis being out at night counting stars:
Who wants to know how many stars there be?
He's come home for the first time in fourteen years,
After living in foreign parts among savages;
He was always fond of duck eggs and I must see he has plenty.

97.—Mrs William Bowles

It's a good thing Thomas did leave the Chapel,
Or his Missis would have managed as he'd been Second Deacon instead of William.
When Isaac Creasey passes away we shall stand first,
And by then, if things go as well as they promise,
We shall be able to live up in the village
Instead of down this Fen where nobody passes except Jabe Wells.
It's a long way to drive to Chapel,
But we wouldn't miss if it was twice as far.
On Thursday Mr Tyrell preaches at the Anniversary:
Mrs Barley, Mrs Fullerton, Mrs Ambrose, and her three girls, have promised to sit at my table
And I shall take Grandmother Bowles's silver service and a quart of cream.
William says it's against the law while the War's on
But Mr Daniels wouldn't interfere with our Anniversary,
And anyway he can't get the cream back once it's gone, can he?
Of course the Dobneys will make a show—
They always do—
She wears enough on her back to stock a farm,
Which doesn't seem right at a Chapel tea,

But my sealskin coat's as good as anything of hers.
Mrs Creasey never makes a fuss because Mr Isaac keeps her too close
And it's not surprising the visiting pastors stay at the Dobneys:
Besides—he talks so!
I'm glad I married a quiet man,
Always there and always the same
And master in his own home as he should be.
I have to be careful not to set him against Mrs Thomas
Because I don't want folks to say I've made him quarrel with his brother;
I've plenty to do without that:
Milk to churn, butter to make, bread to bake, poultry to feed, children to look after, dinner to cook, dairy to clean, and forty more things,
To say nothing of the housework—
All single-handed.
When we live in Fletton I shall have a maid like sister-in-law Waddy
And put a black dress on for tea when the pastors come:
Maud Dobney (that was) says they all like good feeding,
And some of them look as if they didn't often get it;
They shall have pork-pie, ham, hot-buttered cake, blackberry jam, crumpets, sausage-rolls, home-brewed beer, and all the cream they want.

98.—Daniel Skinner

When I learnt my trade they trusted in English oak
Grown on the spot and well-seasoned,
But now they're all for cheapness.
When I've done a job I like it to be for keeps,
Not to be called in next summer to patch it up;

That's all right for James Toulson
Fussing about with steam-saws and apprentices straight from school
What don't know an adze from an axle,
But I've a reputation and think of my latter end.
Good work well done has been the foundation of Fletton,
And if it's not kept up the place will go to ruin.
The houses built lately won't stand a generation;
Toulson did 'em on contract helped out by Billy Bean, and I saw what went into 'em;
I wouldn't sleep in one on a windy night if they gave it me.
If one of my boys had stopped I'd a brought him up the same way;
But Joe never settled
And when he began to write home from Queensland about land to be had for the taking, Albert soon went to join him;
I did hope little Daniel would stay:
Now they want me to sell out and spend my old age in a foreign country.
I was born in Fletton and I'll be buried in Fletton
Where there's been Skinners since no one knows when;
Now there's only my girl Joyce and my cantankerous nephew Moses left.
Old England's good enough for me,
I've no faith in foreigners;
Look at the Frenchwoman that married old Albert Tharp and ran away!
Them Tharps has had a wrong strain ever since.
Young Waddy says the soil in Queensland grows four crops a year
Which doesn't sound in the way of Nature,
But he swears to it,
And some of what he says is borne out by Joe's letters.

I wish they'd been able to stop in Fletton,
Only they couldn't get land or houses;
It don't seem right as one man should own it all
To parcel out to fellows like Challands
Who's as much as would have kept my three:
They'd have farmed his head off.

99.—Peter Todd

Now I've come to an understanding with Smithson
I feel as if there was nothing else to try for:
The Todds will stand first in Fletton.
There's times when I've wished I'd set up in Bly
Like Elsom or Fennington or Sharp, or the great Mullens
Who've a railway at their front door and a canal at the back,
Moving corn in and out like lightning;
But for all that I'm glad I didn't:
Those chaps go down like ninepins in a bad time,
Whilst I've had the farm to lean against,
And there's nothing so substantial as Land—
Trade comes and goes but Land's always there;
It can't run away in the night.
Thanks to being well in with the Agent
(Using my great influence at elections)
I've been able to get both my lads placed out;
That's the best of farming;
You can start your boys one at a time without feeling it
And help 'em along till they're afloat
So they can marry early and begin as they mean to go on
(Keeping a sharp eye on their wives—
Women'll ruin you if you let 'em—
Look at my brother-in-law).

I'm not sorry as neither of 'em wanted to carry on the corn-buying;
Although David's smart enough:
I had a good run and no competition to mention
Until that sneaking Stower started his dirty tricks.
My son-in-law, Townsend, will have to keep his eye open.

100.—Jimmy Dodds

Aunt Stower's given me a pair of boots to start in
And I get two new suits a year
And Mam will let me have sixpence a week.
Mrs Nat what's staying at the Vicarage (but is no relation to Grandad) has given me half a crown;
If I'd begun sooner I'd have had a lot saved up for the Feast .
Since Dad hurt his leg he ain't earned much regular money
(*Aeroplane!*)
But now I've left school we shall be all right.
I'm to groom the pony and tend the Vicarage garden,
And on Sundays go once to Church and once to Chapel turn about
By special agreement with the Vicar,
Because Mam's afraid of Grandad, what's wrong in his head.
He built our Chapel years and years ago
And never misses if the rheumatiz lets him.
Mam says I mustn't listen to his talk:
As if I should!
He scares you the way he grabs your arm,
And his eyes are like red-hot nails.
At Church there's the beautifullest window of different colours,
And the organ!!!

Miss Wilders says if I blow for her nicely she'll learn
me the notes,
So I shall be able mebbe to play like her one day,
Which is more'n Ham Townsend or Monty Ferrett'll
ever do.
We sing better at Chapel of course—
You can hear my alto above everybody—
And Mister Winterbourne gives me peppermints,
But there's nothing like an organ.
I'm very lucky to get a job in such a wonderful
house;
They put the rummest clothes on at night—
I don't mean nightshirts
But suits to have their supper in when Amy Maple-
thorpe waits on them,
And there's a bedroom with nothing but a bath in it
And hot water always ready.
It's better than having to work for that horrible Mr
Challands;
I'm scared of Miss Challands
Who will kiss me on my mouth when I take the
washing back.

101.—Amelia Lowe

To-day's my ninety-sixth birthday but I don't feel it;
I may have to stop in my bedroom through the winter
by Dr Berry's orders,
But when the fine weather comes I get about in my
bath-chair,
And so long as Lottie Burrows is here I don't mind.
That Nurse from London is always fussing round,
But I don't hold with foreigners.
She's very fond of me, is Lottie—
And I'm sorry I can't leave her anything but these bits
of sticks.

Father willed all the property to my humbugging half-brother—
Fred Dobney—
Providing he paid me three pounds a week as long as I live.
It was a grand old business but Fred's wife has spent all,
And only the fear of Lawyer Ferrett has made him pay up lately:
Cousin Jeremiah warns me even that won't avail much longer,
But he was always gloomy.
If the weather's damp and my chest not so good, Fred sends his girl round to ask how I am,
Hoping to hear the worst—
When she comes into the bedroom I shut my eyes and don't speak,
Just to aggravate him—
I'm not going before my time.
There's only two now in Fletton older than me
And George Jenkins isn't likely to last out long;
Then it will be a race between me and Sarah Jackson:
She comes of a poor stock and I shall beat her easy.

102.—Mrs Thomas Bowles

I was a fool to take Thomas!
He's as dry as a codfish and as mean as dirt,
Always contriving it's my money to be spent and not his:
I'm sick to death of his thin lips and eyes drawn up with wrinkles.
I ought to have had his brother, who is twice the man—
I should have had children by him—
But he got taken in by a servant girl, more's the pity.
Men are such ninnies!

As for Thomas—he's hankering after his old sweet-
heart
Who makes eyes at him through their shop window;
He never dared marry her because she hadn't a penny,
And now he's sorry.
I wish he'd bolt to Australia with her,
But he hasn't the pluck;
It's a good thing for her he hasn't.
The only thing I got by marrying again
Was being able to cut away that tribe of Creaseys
and Dobneys:
Susan ought to have made her man go to Church.

103.—Mercy Cullen

He was a little wrong in his head at times—
Poor child—
Perhaps it was something to do with Grandmother
Dorrien the Frenchwoman:
He would a got over that if he'd married and reared
a family.
Brother Albert was the same when he was young,
But thirteen bairns gave him enough to think about
Without shouldering other people's troubles:
There's nothing like a bedmate to cure a boy of idle
fancies.
I'm sorry I didn't overpersuade Alfred
And let Guy have a go at the Civil Service;
Alfred is strong-willed and wanted him in the slaughter
house
Which he hated worse'n poison;
He wished to get out of Fletton because it was 'too
hard':
The world *was* too hard for him, poor child.
The Vicar was very nice about it,
And raised no objection to him lying in the Cemetery:

Everybody knew he wasn't responsible when he had those headaches.
That horrible witch by the Mill offered to cure him for a couple of fat ducks;
As if I should have let her touch him:
She ought to be ran-tanned, only they're all scared of her.
Young Tharp had a bad influence on Guy,
And would play his fiddle till I was nearly crazed;
I couldn't tell him not to come
(Like I did Silly Sam who was always round),
Seeing his father was my brother:
He came to grief himself, however:
You can't outface Providence.
After *that* day I found a lot of exercise books in his box,
All scribbled over in pencil with poetry and stuff that wasn't sense;
I burnt it lest any one should bring it up against him.

104.—Hucklebury Oldfield

Parson can say what he pleases,
But I've got the best of it so far,
And Churchwarden Potterton is with us.
Locking the belfry door agen him was a master-stroke,
And he looks like a fool after his tall talk.
Ain't I the Sexton regular appointed long afore we'd heard of Parson?
And wasn't my Dad and Grandad afore him sextons and blacksmiths in Fletton Parish?
He's only been here about ten minutes,
And reckons the Church is his to do what he likes with;
But he's mistook:
It's ours and will be when he's forgotten:

He'd better go back where he came from—
Trying to alter our old ways.
He says our Moll must go back to her husband,
As if any one could blame her for leaving Bill;
Why don't he talk to the right parties ?
The last straw was when he wanted to stop us ringing for the Club-Feast last Thursday,
Same as we've done from time immemorial;
We locked ourselves in and let him rave in the churchyard,
But he soon got tired of that.
(My old woman could beat him easy.)
What's wrong with Club Feasts ?
Parson's rich and has all the outings he wants;
Why does he grudge us our only holiday
Marching round the village in sashes and white gloves with a band and banner to have a good dinner at the Golden Cross ?
In the old days they used to have a holiday every Sunday,
With dog and cat and cock-fighting and bowls and lots of games in the Abbey Field,
But the Earl took the Field and the Parson took the Holiday.
Hilton Wells—my brother-in-law—says the Vicar will have me turned out,
But I'm duly appointed according to the custom of the Parish
And the Earl himself couldn't do it;
Not as he'd try,
He's a gentleman and knows what's what.
If yon fellow fell from yon aeroplane he'd be ready for me.
Of all that lay around none ever saw such a thing in the air,
And there's a tidy number here and across the road in the Cemetery.

I wish I'd a sovereign for all I've buried,
But whilst I do the work Parson grabs the fee, blast him!
It's always so:
Look at old Challands who ground his labourers down cruel, and lays under that granite pillar;
He lived to a great age, did himself well, drank a bottle of brandy every night, and died in his sleep.
It almost seems better to sweat than be sweated,
Though Enoch Burrows wouldn't have agreed:
He never gave a wry word to any one;
Now he lies beside his missis, while Cartwright hands out writs as if he loved it.

105.—Dr Berry (II)

That wasn't a trap: it was an aeroplane!
It's making as much noise as the Vicar's sister;
If he doesn't send her away
I shall take a long holiday and leave her to look after the practice.
I can stand a good deal,
Though our fool nurse Longthorne tries me hard enough;
But women doctors are the limit,
And Lorne ought to know better;
It's no excuse that she's his only sister from New Zealand,
And that her husband's in the R.A.M.C.
Although she daren't criticise me openly
I know what she thinks by her face when we meet.
If she ran these villages she'd learn the difference between practice and theory:
All that stuff they're crammed with nowadays addles their brains

(I see it in the B.M.J.),
But it doesn't show 'em how to make folks better.
I wonder how she'd get on with Jimmy Bones,
Who I'm trying to cure of a visit to Ann Cutts
(I fancied the old professional had retired long ago):
He's rotten inside and out and stinks worse than his filthy house.
Fletton's looked after well enough:
When folks are ill they don't want book-learning,
They want somebody they've known all their lives to look in with a cheerful smile and tell 'em they're not really bad,
Pass a joke, clap 'em on the shoulder, and say they must get up the day after to-morrow,
Which, thanks to an open-air life and my hypnotic suggestion, they mostly do.
I know all about psycho-analysis!
There's no 'repression' in this village;
The natives obey immediately their impulses of Preservation and Reproduction
And live as naturally as savages
(Except Noah Creasey who, I'm certain, is a pervert).
Children know everything in a village
Where little is talked of but 'breeding,'
And cocks tread hens under the nursery windows.
That Colonial snob had better 'analyse' her brother,
Whose dreams would make her hair curl if he told 'em.
They say she gives the schoolchildren pennies to bob to her in the street:
I should think now the Feast's on she'll do quite a good trade.
If I had my time over I should be a Veterinary:
Hicks gets more for curing pigs than I ever get for curing babies,
Whilst—if it comes to that—Betty Williamson's fees are miles ahead of either of us.

106.—Japhet Ruston

Things aren't what they was in grandfather's time
when there was a toll-gate on the Bridge,
And everybody had to stop and naturally took refreshment at the Coach-and-Horses;
But these motors don't mind the hills, blast 'em!
Tom Glover's just gone by as if the devil was after him;
He's up to no good, I hear:
The Council should give half his wage to poor Hodgson.
Things are much the same otherways;
The carriers stand by the Bridge on market-days,
And Cart Burrows still jogs past with his wobbling wheels:
He belongs to the Mill Inn so I don't expect him
(*An aeroplane!*
I hope they won't spread, or inns will have to climb steeples).
Bob Cutts walked past as I was shaving—
He won't catch any worms though!
A stranger's gone down the hill;
He'd the same trick of trailing his feet as the Doctor
And I wondered if it could be little Cy Berry grown up.
That rotten Barley's galloped by with his shoulders up to his ears;
I hope the Blue Ribboners'll skin him.
It was my own niece Jane that led him astray,
The interfering sow!
I shouldn't have minded if she'd got hold of Wallace,
Who spends his days dodging in and out the off-licenced houses that ought to be all shut.
Hilton Wells says Wallace says he knows why I refuse to cross *that Bridge*.

But he doesn't:
The secret died with Old Blow.
Hallo!
Here's our Lawyer long before his time;
He's got the young ferret with him too;
That's what Tubby's girls were hanging round for.

107.—Joseph Elvin and Job Creasey

Good morning, Joe,
I'm glad to see you by the window, so—
You've been bad!
A nasty time you've had!
I'm sure you're getting better now,
Your colour's back, and anyhow
You're looking fine:
It's a good sign!
What?—what!
Don't say so!
Come—Joe—
Rubbish, man!
Don't give up living while you can;
Such nonsense talking about dying,
It's 'coz you've been so long a'lying;
Just 'coz you're weak and low:
But . . . that'll go!
The crops is looking splendid down the Fen,
The wheat's in ear,
Harvest's near,
And very soon we'll have you out again.

D'you mean it, Joe?
'*You've known it all along?*'
I hope you're wrong!
But . . . if it's so—
I wouldn't have you deceive yourself,

'Tis best to know!
You'll want me to fetch your Parson, then;
No?
You must want Parson to get you ready;
You've always been to Church that steady—
Not what I call religious, though:
Often I've wanted to talk to you, Joe,
Serious-like but never got started—
That chicken-hearted!
You've gone to Church and prayed on Sunday,
But never carried it over Monday—
Church folk don't—I know!
Religion lives with you in bed at night,
By dark or light, never from sight,
The sureness of Hell—for there is a Hell—
That awful fire *Down Below*
Where all what isn't saved must go;
You too—poor Joe—unless you're saved;
But you know—you *can* be saved!
Salvation's free—
For every one—for you, for me;
You've only got to say the word:
It'll be heard; it'll be heard!
And now let's have a prayer together:
No?
When Death is staring in your face!
Surely you'll wake and seek for grace:
Surely then . . . Joe!

Wait a bit, Job, and listen now to me.
I don't want to be 'saved'—as you would say—
Not if it's earned your chapel-going way;
It's nowt to judge you by as I can see;
Look at our precious neighbour Tommy Stower!
One of your saints, a regular chapel-goer;
Preaches about and goes to all your 'do's,'
Looked on as most religious in his views;

A pious man!
Held up to answer 'Can religion pay?'
A-course it can!
Hasn't it paid your Tommy Stower well?
But—Job! now, say,
Would you take his word when he's anything to sell?
About a horse . . .?
He keeps within the law for fear of worse,
Knowing exactly just how far to go;
His word it isn't worth a tinker's curse!
Why—Job—
Nobody ever *dreams* of trusting him;
And—being so—
Ain't he the very wickedest man you know?
No, lad, you couldn't doubt
As he's the blackest rascal hereabout.
Look how he leads astray his weaker neighbours
What sees him prosper by his crooked labours;
They follow on to do what he has done,
Him what has risen from a poor man's son,
Thinking how fine are his religious ways
What get him straight to Heaven—yet always pays!
Though—mind you, Job—
There's plenty goes to Chapel besides him
What's just as straight and square as they can go;
That's not what I am meaning, though;
For both sorts go and pray together,
Birds of a very different feather;
Some of them hypocrites, and more—
Like Thompson Rowett and Eli Gunn;
Isn't he one, your preaching Stower:
Isn't he one?
Look at the things what he has done!
He's stronger than the likes of we,
He spreads himself like a 'green bay tree.'
Parson once said:
'*The evil what men do lives after them,*

The good is always buried with their bones.'
That's true, you know!
And being so—
Your Stower—
Your pious chapel-goer—
He'll carry on when you and me lies flat:
Mind that!

What *do* I believe then ?
I'll tell you, Job,
I believe in doing fair to all men,
Even to Tommy Stower—
Even to him!
It's been hard;
He's a bad card;
But I tried to mind as he didn't cheat me,
Yes, I took good care;
I didn't want rascals like him to beat me:
So I treated him fair.
What I ask of others is just the same,
' Do to folks as you'd be done to,'
That's about all as life'll run to;
That's my religion, Job,
That's my game.
You can't ask more on this old earth
What's full of corners and knotty places
And hypocrites with smiling faces:
Wrong 'uns from birth;
It's not a perfect world,
It's not a righteous world,
Yet it's not a bad world;
If a man does fair, you can't ask more;
As I've said before,
It matters nowt where he goes to pray,
Or whatever he say;
That's nowt to do with his inner man,
It's never no guide to his inner plan;

You've got to judge a tree by its fruit,
Not by the garden where it has root;
And so you must judge a man by his life—
How he serves his friends—
How he gains his ends—
How he treats his wife;
If he passes that test he's good enough—
Not far astray—
But otherway
He's wrong : no matter where he may belong.

When I was but a little lad,
I went to Church with my old dad;
I sat with him against the door,
My feet could hardly touch the floor,
And everything was strange to me;
While through the porch I loved to see
The birds what chirped and flew about,
Or see the flowers peeping out,
Or listen to the humming-bees,
Or watch the clouds across the trees;
And later I was glad to go:
'Twas regular and it pleased me so
To sit where father did and hear
The selfsame things, come year by year:
Not keep a-squinting at my soul
To see if it be ' saved ' or no,
Like something planted in a hole
Raved up to find if it will grow.

Some never bother unless they're ill;
P'raps they're afraid to face the bill;
They reckon as a Parson's prayer
Will somehow put them on the square;
Thinking they're like the dying thief:
It's only thieves want such relief—
I'm certain Tommy Stower will;
You'll see, if ever he be ill.

Parson will come this afternoon—
It's on his round—he'll be here soon
And read to me the regular prayer,
That for the sick, all right and square;
So come what may I shall scramble along,
No patching me up at the very last breath—
No trying to get me ready for Death—
What's the good of that if your life's been wrong ?

I'm staring Death full in the face,
It's just about the end of my race;
I can't mend it,
I can only end it;
Whatever's waiting for me yonder—
And I often wonder:
If it's Peter, he'll give me a stare—
Then—
' *Have you done fair ?* '
I shall answer square:
I can't say always, Peter, I couldn't,
Nobody could if they only confessed:
But I've struggled hard and done my best!
I've got no preaching to boast about,
And, as for praying, I never could shout;
No—No—I ain't always done fair;
But—Peter—I've mostly tried . . .
What can he say but ' *Come inside* ' ?

108.—Mrs Polly Bugg

Mildred can hint as much as she likes
But I'm not going to be pushed in the corner when any
one calls,
Nor yet go to bed when there's a ' dinner ' on:
The money's mine as long as I live
And I'm good for another forty years *at least.*

Laurie's a genteel lad
But he hasn't the guts of a dormouse,
And like all weak men will slip away unless Mildred
is careful.
I saw him the other night pretending to shut a window
for the little housemaid,
And we all know what comes of that:
I must speak to her mother—
A most respectable charlady.
As I said, I won't be pushed aside.
The Vicar likes talking to me because my common
sense 'refreshes him,'
And, indeed, my manners were looked on as most
refined in Bolton.
Such a nice gentleman stopped me this morning by
the Cemetery;
He's doing welfare work under the Salvation Army,
And hearing my name mentioned everywhere, made
bold to ask for my sympathy:
Wasn't it gratifying?
He said my five pounds would go quite a long way!

109.—Laura Cook

It's too bad of Hannah when she knows how I feel
about Norman
Not to let him lodge with us instead of her;
She doesn't need the money like we do:
(He never pays, anyway)
And with only Dad and me here we could manage
beautiful.
She's jealous because he lets me have the tambourine;
But doesn't she do most of the praying?
She's got one man under her thumb,
And I've a right to one as well:
I may be thirty-eight but I don't look it.

His wife (that left him eight years ago) has just married
a sailor—
He heard from his brother about it—
And he'll be free very soon,
After which we shall live in Plymouth at the fried
fish shop his brother is leaving.
Sister Lizzie can say what she likes—
Just 'coz she came in unexpectedly one evening when
Dad was away—
(Folks ought to knock)
But Jeff Sharples has spoilt her, so she's suspicious of
everybody.
I've a right to do what I like,
And he can't marry me straight away because it would
be bigamy.

110.—Eliza Dobney

I never want to see another Visiting Minister as long
as I live;
The greedy, greasy humbugs!
They say the Labour Party is down on Parsons,
And I shall certainly give them my vote when I get
one.
I don't believe Dad's any fonder of 'em than
me,
Only he lives on the Baptists' trade and daren't say
nothing:
It's mother they get over—
With 'Sister' here and 'Sister' there,
While they help themselves to more cream
And rave against the Vicar or the Roman Catholics.
(Mother's certain they're coming back,
And she'll be burnt alive in the Abbey Field.)
I wish I was out of it all,
Only George is scared to death of his father

And Mr Todd's scared to death of anything not respectable.
Nelly's affair is a great trial
And may ruin my chances altogether:
Fancy being caught in a rhubarb-bed!
Herbert should have told her to be more careful.
Jennie Smithson says the Key girl's rushing round telling every one;
Though she's no occasion to give herself airs—
The baby-snatcher!
Something must be done about George, however,
Who's as weak as water:
If old Mr Todd heard he'd got me into trouble he'd consent quick enough, to hide the scandal;
And we must see what can be arranged:
I dropped George a hint yesterday.

III.—Bill Overton

Herbert Dobney's threatening to have the law on me:
The little skunk!
No wonder his missis couldn't stick him
And fancied a proper man;
She told me she'd never been satisfied before.
She's a fine woman, by God!
And I shan't promise nobody not to see her again—
If anybody tries to make me I'll tear his bloody head off—
I want her to live straight up with me same as Tom Bavin's missis,
Only she kept on about her fine relations:
Now—mebbe—she will.
Moll can stay with her mother till they nag each other to death;
Them Oldfields never stop when they're once started.

I must talk to Mr Dring about this lawyer's letter—
Not as I'm scared of Herbert Dobney—
I doubt though I shan't get an allotment.

112.—Archibald Townsend

Running a seed business is very queer:
You look on your neighbours in such mixed ways;
Especially if you're given to thinking things over.
I was considering my father-in-law, Mr Todd, last night,
Wondering what I really thought about him,
And after I'd written all my views on a sheet of paper I concluded I didn't really know:
As a customer I reverence him, as a farmer I admire him, as a thinking man I ignore him, as a Churchman I part from him, as a Tory I fight him, as an employer I detest him, as a relation-in-law I rather like him:
What *do* I think of him ? . . .
Many things puzzle me in life—
Women are the worst of all:
When you deal with a man in the way of trade,
And you have a little difficulty over something,
You leave it to him to say what's fair
And he always says, *We'll split the difference*
So that everybody's satisfied;
But if you leave it to a woman (like Widow Hemsley) she takes the lot,
Leaving you like a fool in the cart, and she thinking you are trying to cheat her out of her rightful dues:
Now, how is that ?
You can't part folks into sheep and goats as they do in books,
Though they may at the Last Day

(It'll be a job!);
Look at Thompson Rowett:
The worst man in Fletton,
Hypocrite, bully, robber of orphans
And perhaps worse—
Yet he sat up four nights last week with his retriever
And cried like a baby when he had to put her out of her misery.
I was sorry for Tharp but I couldn't save him;
There was so much of myself in the boy, he scared me.
My heart isn't in this business, or anywhere in Fletton:
What's worse, I don't know where it is,
Unless in my thousand books:
How Enid hates them.
I'm really only a money-lender;
No farmer ever has enough capital;
As fast as they grow they take more land;
Hanbury lends carefully at seven or eight per cent. whilst I plunge at forty,
Advancing seed-corn, manure, potatoes, peas, or clover-seed, and trusting them till harvest.
There isn't even any real competition:
Once farmers trade with you not dynamite will change them.
Their stupidity is profitable of course;
If they had the sense of sheep they'd co-operate and cut out Hanbury, Stower, Sharp, Mullen, and all those blood-sucking parasites in Bly who grow fat on them,
Giving no commensurate service for their profits.

113.—Susannah Creasey

Why did I come to the Feast?
They drive me crazy with their talk;
Yet I must tell mother,

Though how to do it I don't know.
She's never set foot out of Fletton since she was born
And thinks the Baptists are all that count.
If Tom had any money it would be simple:
I could go and live in another town till it was over,
But he hasn't a penny,
And I couldn't save anything because I always had to pay when we went for week-ends.
I can keep on at the Works a little longer,
But it's getting risky;
And when mother said yesterday 'I was taking after her,'
I thought for a moment she'd guessed.
The worst is, she'll want to know Tom's name,
And he'd be ruined if it came out;
The Bly District Council are a horrible lot,
And his wife's as jealous as might be expected from her yellow face.
I would sooner die than injure him,
But I *must* tell mother to-day.
If only it wasn't for the Chapel it would be easy,
'Coz she's as fond of us all as an old hen,
And who else should a girl turn to in trouble?
The Bowleses and Dobneys scare her,
To say nothing of that old ape Uncle Isaac.

114.—Josef Borkman

Ah! these brute English,
Ill-mannered, immoral, and irreligious;
They waste, they waste, they waste,
Within their homes and without,
Everywhere they waste;
Their wives cannot cook, their men cannot farm,
And enough is thrown away in their kitchens and

neglected in their fields to keep my poor Belgium
for ever.
If they were not such cold-blooded hypocritical pigs I
would settle here and get rich quickly:
But their food!
And their clothes!!
And their Sundays!!!
I must make the best of things until the War is over;
The clock-repairing will serve my end,
And I am safe from recruiting inquiries,
Whilst Elise is putting by a fortune in London—
That wonderful city—
Where she gets more from officers each evening
than she took in a month at Ostend.
She banks it every morning in my name
And will open a café when we return,
Whilst I shall have a little farm.
Would you believe it—
These drunken pigs think I ought to feel ashamed of
her!

115.—'Young' Lord Fitz

If only I could wangle another week's leave I could
have worked them both,
But as it is I must content myself with Williamson
And leave the Challands girl for next time.
She's a little peach,
And gave me such a look out of her eye-corner when
I asked old Rowett who she was:
He pretended at first he didn't know
But I lay he did, the old rip!
Wouldn't Geoff Kyme smack his lips over her!
I must speak to Swift about it—
A useful fellow that—
I wish Aubrey would leave him behind

Now he's slinking off to the States because he's got
the little Mogg girl into trouble,
And is afraid of the old man, who hates our family like
poison.
I dare say she's all right,
But how on earth any girl can stand our 'Worm' is
more than I can guess.
I told Williamson I should go to her room to-night,
and she only smiled;
That's what I like:
No fuss!
Her eyes are black and her legs are slim as a young
colt's.
Somehow I think I should have been born before
Aubrey;
All this is no good to him,
And he certainly has no use for it.
The farmers like to see me riding about;
They always give me a smile and a wave of the hand,
And there isn't a soul on the Estate that I don't know
to speak to.

116.—Lawyer Ferrett (II)

(It *is* an aeroplane!)
I've just sent a handsome subscription to Cutts,
Our latest candidate,
Through his agent Jesse Munks;
Anonymously of course.
It's quite amusing:
He calls himself, I fancy, the real heir
And doubtless dreams that after becoming M.P. he
will claim the Earldom.
Next year I must help the Radicals,
Who will be getting disheartened.
As I've always told Wardle

Our greatest mistake was not forcing our tenants to pay
more wages;
We've spoon-fed the brutes,
Giving them huge bonuses to be loyal,
Yet ignored the workers—the common people—
Who, after all, are the base of our pyramid.
Our greedy farmers have treated them worse than
their horses
And three generations of our best blood have gone to
America and the Colonies:
They might just as well have been on the land;
They wanted to stay badly enough,
And would have made us irresistible;
As it is, there are no young men in Fletton.
It's been so silly to let them be driven to revolt,
And would serve us right if it brings down the
System:
I don't think it will—
At any rate not for a long time—
But it might so easily have been prevented.
If the Radicals knew their business they could dish us
any time
By simply abolishing Primogeniture:
We should all vanish then—
Earl, Tenantry, and Ferrett:
But they haven't the sense—
It takes a Bonaparte.

117.—Anthony Dane

This is the greatest day of my life;
The Argentine Bull Importers have cabled accepting
my offer
And I get £27,000 for the whole herd:
Fletton-King, Fletton-Hero, and everything;
Even the five men,

Who get splendid terms to go out as soon as the War's over.
I hope it won't stop yet, though;
We must give the Germans a good thrashing.
Won't brother Solomon be——
But I mustn't speak of him or I shall lose my temper;
It was bad enough when we were partners.
Twenty-two years have gone by,
And he has less now, than then—
Busy on everybody's business but his own,
With a fool for a son.
I shall be able to sell out and clear over fifty thousand,
Which isn't so bad when you look where I began.
I can carry out my dream of buying Joe Thomson's house,
Who's on his last legs;
I shall pay him enough to cover the mortgage twice over,
So that I can live retired in the best house in Fletton
As a gentleman at large,
Taking the shooting in Thorpe Fen;
And if the eldest Mogg cares to be my second wife
I may get another boy.
Wouldn't my wretched son be mad!
Judah ran away with the Irish governess who was so fond of me,
And drove with me everywhere in the hooded gig,
In my poor crazed wife's time,
Till he came home from the Agricultural College and got round her.

118.—Jesse Munks

It's lucky my living comes from poor folks
Or I shouldn't be able to carry on the Cause;
But even if they turn me out of this lodging

I can stay with Waddy, who isn't tied like the Atkins.
That's the best of being a bachelor,
Waddy says them that fight for the people always must be:
You sell your soul if you marry—he says.
The news about Cutts has made a rare noise
And I hear Luke Fletcher's torn his last wisp of hair out.
The Tories are open enemies and bad 'uns,
But the Rads promise all and pay nothing.
We've one weak place—
If it gets out that we want the Government to take the land over,
Our chance is gone—
It's a rotten policy and I can't think why they don't drop it;
They'll have to, sooner or later,
Or they'll never hold the countryside.
What everybody wants is a bit of land for himself—
Me, for one—
That's why Moller Holmes is doing so well with his Union.
The other thing that scares me is the women
Who ought to plump for Labour,
But most of them would sell their souls to have tea at the Dower House.
(I'm not even sure of Moller's missis.)
Look at Liz Dodds:
Nobody's fought and suffered more for the people than old Nat,
But she is all for Wardle,
And I'm not sure she won't make Bob the same:
It makes you sick!

119.—Solomon Dane, J.P.

There's a great charm about a public career;
It takes hold of a man;
And when I look back on a life spent in my neighbours' service
I feel I have not lived in vain.
I haven't made a fortune like brother Tony
But look at him, with never a thought for others:
What good has it done him ?
His only son a ne'er-do-well, his daughter—none knows where.
The good old days are gone for ever
When Labour was respectful, and grateful;
Look what I've done for mine:
Not a farmer in Fletton has been more thoughtful;
And though of course I couldn't set my neighbours by the ears
By raising wages or altering hours,
I've always paid half for illness
(Up to a reasonable time)
And the same for wet days
(Also in reason),
And at Christmas a bag of coal for each cottage.
In spite of my solemn warning every one has joined this wretched Union,
And asks for higher wages than we can possibly pay.
Once they used to handle them firmly,
(Agitators were hanged as a warning)
But the times have changed, and even magistrates cannot administer justice as they ought.
I shall dismiss these Union men and lay my land down to grass;
They'll be on their knees then fast enough.

120.—The Countess

It's time women had the vote;
Geoffrey's a fool, Eustace an ass, Aubrey a molly-coddle, Maurice a lunatic, and Arbuthnot Wardle a noodle.
The village is worse:
Lorne and his ridiculous wife
And their snobbish relation from the Colonies—
Why don't they keep them—
Berry's an atheist and a dipsomaniac,
Whilst Ferrett gives me the creeps.
America may alter Aubrey's fantastic notions,
And some pork-packer's daughter complete the cure:
She'll be vulgar enough, no doubt—
Not that we want her millions in Fletton,
Or shouldn't if we had any one but the incompetent Eustace for agent.
We might of course buy out Marshfellowton, who is inclined to sell,
And that would nearly double our acreage here.
I'm in favour of consolidation:
We had better sell our outlying land and be great in one place.
The War has doubtless increased our value
And my brother says our income ought to be quadrupled.
If only he could take Eustace's place it would—
When the War restrictions are removed—
But the Cootes are not only idiots,
They are as obstinate as mules
And Geoffrey would rather die than make any change:
You have only to look at his long upper lip.
Fitz takes after me and is my only hope:
He would never truckle to Labour,

But would die in the last ditch defending our ancient rights.

121.—Hiram Jorkins

Being under a Committee's no bottle!
They come by twos and threes and ask the softest questions
And never attend to nothing;
They wouldn't give me a penny rebate on account of the flood last spring
Though all the Estate got allowed,
And if Mr Townsend hadn't been easy over his bill I should have been stumped:
Anybody as takes a holding under a County Council when they can get one in the old way's a fool!
I'd a thousand times rather be under our Earl, like Moses Skinner.
Best of all would be to own your own place,
Which, however, don't seem possible;
I suppose there must be Earls,
Though if what Huck Oldfield told our Ezra about them Socialists be true,
The sooner they come in the better.
Everybody in the country'll be for them
Excepting big farmers like them Danes
Who—they say—have cleared a million out of the war:
They've more land than they can see over, once in three months,
While I know every inch of mine backward.
When you've your own show you can improve it,
'Coz all you put into it is yours;
But who's going to slave for a Committee?
It pays you better to get what you can out of one holding and go to another.

122.—Ethel Rowett

It's dreadful to have a beast for a father,
And can't get away from him;
He sits with his legs sprawled across the hearth
And talks all day about how much cleverer he is than
anybody else.
I could cut his throat with a carving knife!
He's always egging me on to marry Abe Smart,
As if he hadn't cured me of wanting to marry anybody
(Now Aaron Tharp's gone);
I'd rather sell myself in the streets of London like
Annie
Than be shut up all night with such as him.
I shouldn't do like Annie and sell myself cheap,
But dear, like Mrs Borkman,
Who, I must say, I admire:
She does what no one in Fletton ever did—
Looks facts in the face.
When I caught Dad creeping out of the kitchen attic,
Trying not to rattle the latch,
Why didn't he brazen it out, instead of saying Lizzie
Wells had been taken ill
And that he'd heard her calling out
But she was easier now,
Little knowing I'd been watching for a good twenty
minutes through the keyhole:
She's nothing but a child from school
And may well be ill presently by what I saw.

123.—Herbert Dobney

It's fine to sit like a spider in the middle of a web:
What's done here touches everybody down to the
least,

And I may be said to be the real Owner,
Seeing the reins pass through my hands.
Leaving Dad, to be clerk here, was a good stroke,
'Coz the old shop's on its last legs
And I reckon John Overton's been draining Dad of late.
The Agent values me immensely,
As well he might:
It's me that manages the Estate while he's golfing.
What a fool a gentleman can be at business,
And he doesn't even notice his wife's carryings-on.
Mebbe, though, that's what he thinks of me,
As if I wasn't only too glad of a chance to be shut of Nell.
I thought her a great catch when I married her,
She being related to rich Farmer Waddy
(Whose wife wears the breeches)
And I thought it would help me to get a farm myself;
But I found they set no store by her,
At which I'm not now surprised:
She's a greedy, idle, overgrown fool.
Lawyer Ferrett thinks I may get enough out of that hulking Overton
To pay the cost of a divorce;
Seeing they were caught in the very act in Stower's garden there ought to be no difficulty.
I must get hold of all the cash I can though:
George Todd was the last I shall let off with ten pounds;
It's worth twenty to have my good services here,
As Nehemiah Stennett will find out at Michaelmas;
And if Anthony Dane retires I shall get a hundred out of some one.

124.—Adah Williamson

Walter Jackson had hardly left me last night
(He's getting round me to get round mother,
Who he thinks has put a spell on him)
When that overgrown schoolboy upstairs gave me a
five-pound note
And said he'd see me later:
I'd liked to have boxed his ears
But I don't want to lose the place,
I shouldn't be near the Viscount then
(He's going soon enough).
I'm swapping rooms with Tilly Bones, the new
scullery maid,
Who's as rough and raw as a beetroot,
And little Fitz is welcome to what he gets.
Why can't mother give me a spell to hold the
Viscount?
I'd sell my soul to get him,
Even for a week,
And he wouldn't leave me after.
Walter heard Tubby Ambrose talking to himself down
by Long Wood,
And from what he gathered, Dolph Swift is up to
some mischief:
Master Dolph had better be careful
Or I shall set sister Leah's Tom on to him.

125.—Oliver Barley

Thanks to Mr Woolerton and Providence
I was turned from my drinking ways
To become the smartest pig-jobber in Fletton,
And I shall soon beat brother Alec if he isn't careful.
Alec goes on too loud about Game,

Which does him no good in a place like this
Where we're all under one man,
Who, say what you will, is a good one.
That's not the way to get a farm.
I'd like to get Alec to sign the pledge
But he's a hardened sinner and only asks me to have another,
As if the sight of beer didn't make me tremble.
It was the drowning of Jerry Bellamy that turned me;
We fell in together,
And when Mrs Bellamy caught hold of one of us she found it was me—
Which wasn't a bad thing for her—
While I've become a regular attender at the Wesleyan Chapel.
If we can get the pubs closed it will be grand!
Mr Woolerton says we shall,
And only reprobates like Saddler Jordan and Joe Goose want to keep them open.
What right have they to tempt folks with their open doors and bright parlours and jolly company—
I mean wicked company—
So that you have to whip your horse and hurry past?

126.—Snip Maplethorpe

These farmers have all made fortunes out of the war:
Why don't they spend some of it?
A tailor's life was a misery even in the old days,
'Coz our folks don't begin to get used to a suit till they've had it ten years.
Dad made a square-cut rig for Jeremiah Lowe in eighteen-ninety,
And by all accounts he'll be buried in it.

Our Vicar, who ought to set the fashion, is downer at
the heels than any,
Beaten only by Peg-Leg Jackson or Hiram Jorkins;
I always expect Daniels to pull Mr Coote up—
He ain't respectable behind—
And his trousers hang in such loops they make me
dizzy.
When Abel Sneath retired I thought he'd have a new
kit,
But you'd a thought I was trying to rob him by his
noise;
And they *say* Mogg's Sunday suit came out of Wales
the year of the Great Exhibition:
It may be so;
I always thought Cobbler George made it.
When Mr Wardle comes electioneering I sit on the
front seat
To study the latest fashions from London:
He's a picture!
And these farmers' sons what fancy themselves with
knitted waistcoats and brown boots should study
him too.
Cutts has no chance against him;
He's a low fellow anyway,
That my uncle picked out of the gutter.
Dolph Swift's a dandy in his way,
Though he's too girlish for my fancy
And Widow King's boy Jerry says he wears stays.
If it wasn't for Wallace Ruston, Alec Barley, and
David Coulson,
And the sing-songs we have on Saturday nights,
I'd close down and take a job under the Army
Clothing Depot.
What chance have you in a place where fashion never
changes,
And the labourers pass their corduroys from father to
son?

127.—George Todd

He's deep is Dad,
And I may as well agree to what he wants:
Old Dobney's going to be made bankrupt next week,
And Dad's fixed it with Piggy Smithson for the banns
to be published on Sunday between me and his
Jane,
Until when I'm to keep away from the Dobneys.
Won't Lizzie be mad!
Only last night she hinted at a week-end away,
Which is what I've been after so long,
Having had to content myself up to now with odd
snatches.
Dad says they'll be desperate,
And she'll do *anything* to nail me;
For all that I don't cotton to Jenny Smithson;
Liz would make six of her,
And I'd liever have had Liz,
But Dad won't hear of it—
Especially now.
Besides, as he says, your life ain't over because you're
married;
Them what has money, he says, mostly get what they
want.
That may be so!
I shall have to do what he wants
Or David would get all his money.

128.—Arbuthnot Wardle, M.P.

The news about this fellow Cutts is almost too good
to be true!
How foolish it is to get in a panic
Because the Socialists carry a few towns;

We shall always keep the land,
Thanks to their idiotic idea of nationalising it.
I'm afraid our poor old Radical Scarecrow will be disheartened
And may throw up the sponge,
Which would be awkward,
Especially as we've got several streets of Bly in the constituency.
I must talk to the Countess to-day about sending help to Bennington's agent Fletcher;
A touch of the Socialist Bogey should suffice for the hard-mouthed cranky old she-devil.
I must say I agree—to some extent—with Ferrett,
Who's no fool:
The Countess would do well to listen to him
Only she's so pig-headed,
Thinking the *Morning Post's* inspired
Because Victoria used to swear by it.
We haven't done enough for the working class:
There's been no need to drive them to the Rads
With whom they have nothing in common;
We should have seen that they had better conditions
Instead of waiting to have them forced on us.
Where Ferrett's mad is wanting to give them land:
That would never do;
It would upset the System.
What a joke this rant about democracy is!
We keep quietly along and it makes no difference:
As somebody said in the 'House' lately
The more you change it, the more it's the same thing:
That hits off Old England to a T.

129.—The Vicar

If only I had my life over again,
The Church is the last thing I should try;
It's been one long struggle with poverty.
I am surrounded by Nonconformists—
Mostly well-to-do tradespeople and arrogant farmers,
Labourers who are bigoted Methodists,
And the Family who are patronising and mean.
Pinch, Pretend, and Struggle,
Struggle, Pretend, and Pinch,
Whilst your heart aches and your boots always want mending.
That surly Cobbler George keeps raising his prices—
He takes after his father, the wicked old bargeman—
And I can only shop with Church people like the Wilders or Pottertons
Instead of getting better goods at less cost from Mrs Woolerton.
You'd think the Earl would increase this endowment,
But there's an unexpected strain of parsimony in the Cootes;
They even save their threepenny pieces for the offertory.
How can I make ends meet on under three hundred a year,
When seventy goes to pay off my predecessor's improvements,
And Income Tax and Repairs take a good slice of the remainder,
Leaving me relatively poorer than Joseph Makins,
Who, I notice, spends half his time in the Golden Cross.
If my sister Adela hadn't helped me recently
I should have come to a standstill.
It's so many years since I had a new suit

That I daren't look Maplethorpe in the face.
Black Betty thinks she put a curse on me:
There *is* a curse on me:
It was put on by the Bishop at my Induction,
And will never be lifted unless I copy that North-country Rector
And bolt to Australia with some one who would love me for myself alone,
And not for the position of Vicar's wife in an aristocratic neighbourhood.
Adela ought to change places with me,
This suits her down to the ground,
Whilst I long to sit in my shirt at a Club-Feast dinner with a pot of beer and a girl on my knee, not caring a carrot who saw me, and eat and drink without any thought for the morrow.

130.—Albert Cook, Jr.

All the school reckon Mrs Dring's cleverer'n Mr Dring,
Who forgets what he's doing in the middle of a class
While we chuck paper darts about
Till he wakes up and raps on the desk.
Joey Cullen says he's asleep with his eyes open;
It may be so;
Horses sleep standing up.
Yesterday afternoon he went off with old Mr Lowe,
And Mrs Dring asked me to stop behind to help her move the kitchen-dresser:
I didn't want to stop because it's Feast-Week,
And sometimes if you're down early and help the show-men to carry water they let you in free,
But she said I shouldn't lose by it
So I counted on getting a penny.

When we'd moved the dresser and then moved it
back because she'd changed her mind,
She put her arm round my neck and gave me a kiss
And slipped her other hand in my trousers pocket:
After I'd gone I found a shilling there—
I wonder why she wished I was older;
I'm thirteen on Tuesday.
Shan't I have a time at the Feast to-night!
I shall go straight to the Pictures,
And then the Boxing Kangaroo,
And then the Roundabouts,
Though I shan't be in a hurry
'Coz I spent all my fivepence last night before I'd
properly looked round.
I'm reckoning on another twopence after tea,
'Coz coming home last night I see our Captain
What lodges with us
Kissing Mr Piggy Smithson's daughter agen the
Cemetery.
They was right inside the bushes, and I shouldn't a
known
Only I was being sick on account of a piece of cocoa-
nut what had been trod in the mud.
He must be fonder of kissing than me
Because I've seen him at it before,
Though I shan't say who with. . . .
I ought to get a penny out of him not to tell nobody,
And another out of Mam for telling her.

131.—'Club-Foot' George Pratt

Who's welcome in the early morn?
Who's valued more than growing corn?
Who's humoured in the afternoon
And begged 'to leave off working soon';
Told to 'go easy if he can':
Why—Me! the unconscripted man.

This War has answered for a lot,
But now it's touched the very spot;
Our Master runs from morn to night,
Uneasy if I'm out of sight;
To keep me happy is his plan,
'Coz I'm an unconscripted man.

When War broke out and all our chaps
Went marching off in khaki caps
The Master says, ' Now Georgie Pratt
Your twisted foot's no good for that;
Apart from it you're sound, I know,
But thanks to this, you'll never go.'

' So don't you leave me, George, my son,
I'll treat you as I treat my own;
Good masters' scarce, you stick to me,
'Coz us two always did agree;
You're getting plenty, but anyway
I'll promise never to drop your pay.'

I smiled at that but didn't speak:
Before the War—the nasty sneak
'Tis well they named him Cunning Jim—
Just 'coz I had a twisted limb
He docked my daily wage a penny
Although I worked as hard as any.

If I was but a minute late
He stood—his watch out—at the gate,
If I should stop to draw a breath
He used to scowl as black as death;
Once when I begged a holiday
He nearly fainted dead away.

The neighbours call him Cunning Jim
'Coz no one gets the best of him;

Leastways that always was his boast,
But now I've got the brute on toast;
Before this foreign War be done
I'll make him wish as he'd a gone.

You'd really laugh to hear him now,
It's: ' Would you kindly go and plough ? '
Or, ' If you're ready, George my lad,
To start and hoe I *should* be glad;
Just take your time, don't start too fierce;
Don't hurt yourself; good men be scarce! '

He used to watch, all in a stew,
Lest I should find an egg or two;
But now it's ' George, take one for tea;
'Twill strengthen you to work for me;
I'm all for feeding men up fat '
(As if I shouldn't see to that!).

A cat would grin to see us here,
He sweats and groans, afraid to swear;
Curses himself and blows and pants;
I comes to work just when I wants;
Instead of thirteen bob and kicks
I'm drawing thirty-nine and six.

He sees me come at half-past seven
And sets his teeth (it's just like Heaven!)
Bethinks himself and tries to smile,
The yellow-bellied bag of bile,
'Coz who the devil would help to mow
If I should leave he doesn't know.

Nobody else would help him now
Not if he paid 'em ever so;
This is my chance, it's come at last,
To square myself for what be past;

He pays and groans, afraid to squeak:
I raise my wages every week.

A shilling every week I raise
While poor old Jimmie grunts and prays;
I tell him every now and then
I'm off to work in Hordle Fen;
Who bids the most and pays enow
Will have me for the next week through.

That almost scares him off his head
But Jimmie needn't have no dread,
I'm going to stop and pay him out,
The wankle wizened little lout;
This is my time for laying hold;
I wouldn't leave for minted gold.

Now as the harvest's coming on
I rest on Saturday afternoon,
On Sunday in the Master's trap
I set off with another chap
To keep myself from getting stale:
Our Master finds cigars and ale.

My money isn't squandered though,
These happy times is sure to go;
And when the Army's landed home
Our Master thinks his time will come;
I know his nasty cunning tricks:
He'll cut us down to twelve-and-six.

But not for George what knows too much
To get his arm fast in a crutch;
I'm laying by each week a pound,
And when that time has come around,
With my best thanks to Cunning Jim
I'm going to say Good-bye to him.

132.—Tom Barks

Mester Bowles is a good mester but the Missis is better;
Since I got my legs under her table I've put on over three stone,
And she says she can hear me growing.
I'm glad I came here instead of joining brother Joe,
Who leads a rare life but will land in jail;
While George's job is so soft he'll never get out of it.
It was through 'living in' here that I met Sophie;
Fancy me walking out with the Missis's sister!
Though, thank goodness, she ain't stuck up;
And after all her sister Mag married Lynn Stower
Who's only a publican,
And her Uncle Obadiah mends the roads.
Albert Hodgson's promised to help me to get a bit of land at Hordle the year after next,
When we shall marry and make a start with old John's help.
Our Missis as good as told Sophie the Mester will lend a hand too:
Once started on my own I shall never look back.

133.—Amelia Oldfield

I was near to agreeing with Huck that Moll should go back,
But brother Thompson's not the one to say a man can do as he likes,
Or talk about a wife's duty,
Or say it probably wasn't Bill's fault:
I know more about Thompson's home life than he thinks.

As for Mrs Lorne,
Seeing how things are between Huck and the Vicar
You'd a thought she'd a kept away;
But she never did know her place.
Us Rowetts are an old family and as good as hers, if she *did* nobble a parson.
Sister Dora says she braunges into their house just the same,
But Joe Elvin never stood up to nobody:
I told her quick to mind her own business—
Moll shall stay here as long as she wants.

134.—The Earl (II)

(I must have been dreaming when that aeroplane startled me.)
I speak in the House on Wednesday against that wretched Herries,
Who, worse than any foe, stabs his own in the back,
Advocating an advanced programme for the land.
The atmosphere of our Chamber has been sufficient heretofore to cool the hottest brain,
But this half-Jew, half-Welshman outraves the Premier at his worst.
I have primed myself with excellent arguments from the Fabians,
Who prove that peasant-proprietorship is uneconomic, reactionary, and against the interests of the State.
They draw false conclusions from these excellent premises,
Wishing the State to be the Owner,
But that is capable of instant rebuttal,
And I can show that the personal landlord is better than any Controller,

Just as I can ridicule their screams against the beneficient policy of the Enclosure Acts.
Herries little dreams that I shall spike his guns with quotations from Sidney Webb and Hilaire Belloc.
We gave ground to Manchester for a century,
And what has Manchester made of England?
Its vile cities give answer
With their sunless tenements and harvest of stunted slaves.
Trade-and-the-Flag, Commerce-and-Colonies, International—Financiers, Jews in the Upper-Chamber, Clerks in the Lower,
That's Manchester's century of Imperial Democracy,
Culminating naturally in an Imperial War—
With Conscript Armies replacing our Fleet—
Which will probably bleed us to death.
Give me Little England,
The England of the Seventeenth Century—
Merrie England—
With a contented flourishing population of about ten millions.
Let us regather under the banner of our great leaders Salisbury and Lansdowne
Who stood, and stand, for principles coherent and continuous.
We want no understanding with hostile Parties,
No entanglement with unreliable Frenchmen or Americans:
The Landed Aristocracy made England great;
It kept her great, and will save her from disaster,
If only to herself she will be true.

135.—Tom Burrows

Nothing's nicer than a fresh-turned field
When the soil's warm and loamy,
With the furrows straight as if they was ruled,
And the birds all after the worms;
You'd think they enjoyed it the way they sing;
Mister Tharp used to say so:
He'd walk beside me by the hour
While I learned him a lot of the old songs.
I went Carol-singing with Dad and Blind Johnny as soon as I could walk;
Now I'm doing two men's work,
But it's better'n having a leg shot off by the Germans.
I might even have been up in yon aeroplane!
Mister Pinion fought well to keep me
And I don't see,
As I tell Jesse Munks and Moller Holmes,
Why I should join a Union to fight him.
I've no fault to find with the gentry;
The Earl's done me no harm,
And Parson was very kind to Maria last winter.
I should like an allotment of course:
Old John, our foreman, what thinks himself so clever,
(Though, mind you, he knows the secret of good farming
And that's deep ploughing)
Has promised to ask the master to let me have half a rood, back of the cottage:
I could show Billy Bean how to grow potatoes then.

136.—Adela Hurcomb-Knatt

New Zealand will never show the culture that plays around this lawn and age-old trees;
It's a delightful corner of a lovely country;

The servants docile, the tradesmen polite, the common
folk know their place,
And being curtsied to in the street is just heavenly.
Everything is the opposite of Christchurch,
Where your servants think themselves better than you,
Demanding every evening off and incredible wages
(With double if they wear uniform),
Which they squander in the worst taste
On showy blouses and vulgar ornaments.
Most of these people have never left Fletton,
And many of them have never seen the sea.
When Archie's demobilised we will settle in England,
And if this degraded Doctor has drunk himself to
death
We could live here.
We might, of course, set up at Hordle
Which is only four miles away,
And nearer Bly,
But it's a dreadful hamlet,
Full of small-holders and blasphemous ruffians with-
out any landlord,
And a Vicar who keeps racehorses.
Janet didn't contradict the rumour that I had a
Degree,
Hoping it would annoy Berry.
Wouldn't it be sweet to see the Towers from one's
window,
And meet the Countess quite often, as Janet does.
I was introduced to the Viscount at the Dower House;
He didn't speak for a time,
Then asked if I'd known Samuel Butler in New
Zealand:
I tried to find if he meant the atheist who wrote those
immoral books,
And whose name is not mentioned there in decent
society,
But he turned the subject.

137.—Peg-Leg Jackson

Why should I sleep in a hay-loft like Silly Sam whilst
Harvey's in a feather-bed
With Tillie Overton to keep him warm,
When I'm twice as good a man as him,
Spite of my one leg:
I could take him by the throat as easy as wink.
The sooner the Revolution starts the better:
Joe Makin's told us all about it;
Everybody what works will own their own place
While them what don't work can't eat.
They make a good start by killing the lawyers and
police
(I'd wring Skinny Ferrett's neck like a hen's)
And follow with them what owns property;
It's a damned good idea!
I should take over this pub and make it the best in
Fletton,
And when they shared out the women,
Which is another of their good laws,
I'd have Widow Creasey—
A well-preserved woman who'd look fine behind the
bar.
I must find a saucepan and a club;
There's a ran-tanning to-night,
And I hear they meet by the Bridge.

138.—Jane Creasey

I wonder how Doctor Walker's getting on without
me;
The Missis never could begin to cook;
But I haven't missed the Feast once since I left home.
Mother makes me mad with her fussing,

She knows no more about real cooking than a cow:
I'll admit she has a light hand with pastry
And makes simple dishes like frummety all right,
But she couldn't keep a place like mine for one day.
They think she's a wonder in Fletton,
But Fletton might as well have its food raw:
Minnie Harker gives cooking lessons at the night school
And poisoned their Belgian with a soufflé:
I went to one of her lessons and laughed so, I had to come out.
I'm afraid Susan's in trouble;
She's looking all sideways and never touched her dinner:
I daren't ask her because she's so touchy,
But I've seen that little rat Glover with her
And if I'm right he shall be shown up.
Noah's mess is quite enough for one family,
I'm always fearing he'll do something rash;
But we're a crazy family:
Look at Emmanuel!
When I threw a rolling pin at old Skinner's cat last night
He said 'the farthermost stars were jerked to their haunches':
What did the lunatic mean?
I must go and help mother to get ready for David Coulson;
He kills this afternoon and we shall be throng;
David wanted to marry me once,
And sometimes I wonder if I was silly not to:
He's got a fool in my place.

139.—Isaiah Swinton and John Cook

Whatever's the matter, Mr Swinton ?

It's Joe Toynbee's wife.

Your horseman that 'listed ?

As if it wasn't enough for him to slive off and leave me in the lurch. I went across this morning with a bunch of rhubarb to cheer her up, her husband only having gone a week, and expected to find her crying her eyes out——

Poor thing!

She sat in the kitchen with her fourteen bairns clustered round her like a drove of young pigs, and all eating. Their mouths was full of grub, and most of them had toys in their hands. When I began to say I hoped she wasn't taking on, she laughed. Just drawn her separation allowance of two quid a week.

Impossible!

And no man to feed. She doesn't know what to DO with the money. Never seen so much in her life all at once. When I offered her the rhubarb she said—she said . . .

What?

I daren't tell you what she said I was to do with it. A female viper, if ever there was one.

I can't hardly credit it, farmer. Two quid a week ?

Every week she'll draw it; and on her bended knees that woman's praying the war won't ever stop.

But it's wrong.

Woman—I says—Woman, ain't you no natural affection for the man what you chose, the father of your fourteen children, him what's gone to fight for you ?

That would stump her.

You couldn't fathom the wickedness of that creature's heart with a scaffold pole. She's glad.

Never!

It took her all her time to keep a straight face. Talked about how he used to come home on Saturday night dead drunk and wallop her and go to bed in his boots. Never gave her more than eight bob a week to keep the whole family.

She shouldn't a had so many.

Exactly what I said, but don't ask me to tell you what she said then. I'm trying to forget it. If women are going to talk like that the sooner men stop marrying the better.

He'd a right to some of his own money, surelie?

I told her so, John. Your husband, I says, was bound to keep some share of his thirteen bob; and then she said I ought to have paid him more.

No!

I'm going to ask Parson to call on her. When women begin to talk like that, the Devil's very close at hand. Parson'll cope with her if anybody can; which I doubt. Suppose he never comes back, woman, I says solemn-like. He'll come back fast enough, she says; he always turns up. And if he don't, she says, there's a pension.

Of course, farmer, it must make a strange difference to her.

She don't rightly know what to do with her money—new clothes, new boots, new hats, new everything. Been and ordered things by the wagon-load, she has; but even that I wouldn't a minded if she'd *looked* sorry.

140.—Granny Jackson

I'm the longest-lived woman in Fletton,
And when George Jenkins drops off I shall be the oldest in the parish.
Next April I'm a hundred and shall have my picture in the *Bly Chronicle*—
Not for the first time neither—
I cut a tooth at eighty-three
And the Doctor couldn't believe his eyes.
He's been good to me has Doctor;
Folks can go on as they like agen him,
But if he takes a drop now and again who has more right?
Amelia Lowe says she's ninety-six
But she only gets out of bed about twice a year
While I'm as spry as ever—
If it weren't for my legs.
Walter *will* have Lucy Harrod in to help when there's no occasion,
And she will crack up Jenkins 'coz he's her granddad.
Walter's a good boy and the spit of his dad,
My youngest, Abel,
Who died of his bad memory:
He forgot where he'd laid a spring-gun the day Walter was born.
I had to go to the workhouse at Bly
Where I nearly died of cold,
But the Vicar got me one of those Old Age Pensions as the Conservatives give away,
And this new-fangled Nurse has been very nice
Though she *is* pernicketty.
I was glad to get home, like everybody that leaves Fletton;
They all come back sooner or later
However much they talk against it.

Walter's scared of Betty Williamson—
As if she could hurt anybody—
I spanked her many a time when she was little,
And would now if I got agen her.
What I'm nervous of is as my one-legged grandson,
Walter's wicked cousin,
Should come poaching in Long Wood:
I hope Walter'll shoot him.

141.—James Edward Bones (Cunning Jim)

I'll have my own back cost what it may
(In reason)
Sending a fellow dressed up like a policeman to scare me.
Let him take out another summons—
Let him—
I can prove them sheep was vicious.
As for her,
That bloody schoolmarm,
I'm going to have a summons took out too,
For cruelty to children.
That's worse'n anything they say I've done
Which I haven't.
You've got to mind your eye with dangerous animals,
But she thrashes bairns till they're raw,
Picking the poorest what daren't complain
And holding a duster over their faces so no one shall hear their screams.
Lottie Burrows says it's because she can't get a man;
I don't see what that has to do with it,
But she shall go to jail anyhow.
Lottie's crazy to marry me and there's a deal to be said for it;

She's a sensible lass and has a stocking laid by,
But if that Yankee uncle *has* a fortune we don't want to miss it,
And 'twould be as well to have it in writing before we do anything to aggravate him.
We needn't worry about that bed-ridden old sow at the Firs;
Her rubbish ain't worth waiting for.

142.—Shep Dawson

Poor dear old Master,
He was too good for Fletton
Where only 'Cunning Jims' can prosper.
He used to say what his father taught him:
Live as though you would die to-night
And farm as though you might farm for ever,
But what's the good of that if your farm leaves you?
Everybody was main sorry for him:
Mr Elvin and Mr Williamson did their best,
But there's no help when you lose your old home;
And he wanders about like a lost soul.
Fancy him in a pot-shop!
It's almost more'n I can bear to serve another in his place;
Not as I'm not fond of the old cottage,
Even if it's well *is* foul:
When I told the Doctor I'd go on risking it
He called me an old fool and gave me a cigar.
I haven't watered any lambs from it since though,
My innards is salted,
And though they're Master Hideses that's not their fault, poor things.

143.—Algernon Edgerley

Letty says we're dining with the Pinions
And I must tell Will Bavin to have his uniform on;
It creates a good impression!
Pinion fancies his old house,
But he can't even afford a car.
They say his wife came out of a public-house,
With a lot of money to keep him going;
But in spite of that he would have gone under
If it hadn't been for the War, Mr Rowett says;
He says it's saved many a fool.
Mr Longthorne went over my place yesterday,
And greatly admired everything:
The model fowl-run, the acetylene installation, and the herd of Pedigree Goats,
And will copy them in the farm he has just bought so cheaply
Through Mr Rowett's good offices.
He won't belong to the Estate, of course,
But 'twill be nice to have a neighbour who knows London.
He'll find out what it costs to start:
I had a tidy fortune and so had Letty,
Yet I shall be glad when the farm begins to pay;
As it doubtless will directly.
I was Professor Rawson's prize pupil at the Agricultural College
And there is nothing like applied science in business.
Mr Rowett has been through my books
And was most impressed—
I know at a glance what I am losing over each field.

144.—Mrs Solomon Dane

It's worse than drink or gambling,
This rushing after other people's business;
Goodness knows what he isn't,
With a seat on all and Chairman of most:
The Bench, County Council, District Council, Chamber of Agriculture,
Farmer's Union, Drainage Board, Agricultural Committee, and the Guardians,
To say nothing of being President of everything from the Oddfellows to the Football Club.
If they paid him, there would be some sense,
But every one knows what men are when they're not watched;
And all the time the farm goes down.
Where is the four thousand pounds I brought him?
When Nevil marries it will have to be found.
I hope to arrange a match with Mr Smithson's daughter;
It's true it will be a step down,
But nothing—after all—like my poor nephew's fall.
Laurie dragged our family in the mud by taking a pawnbroker's daughter,
And spends his time trying to keep the hideous mother out of sight:
What would my father, Charles Pinion, have said?
He was one of the old school,
And never allowed us to speak to any one in trade.
It's difficult to arrange dear Nevil's affair;
The little girl fresh from school must be painfully shy;
If we have her to tea on Sunday afternoons she may grow out of it.
It will be a great lift for the father
Who is frightfully common,

And if not actually born in a pigsty,
As rumour says,
Was certainly bred in a cottage.

145.—Cartwright Burrows

I like to jog along the road in my old gig
And know that folks are peeping through the curtains,
All the way from Bly to Fletton,
Wondering whether I'm calling on them or their neighbours.
There's no door the County Court Bailiff doesn't stop at,
Even the highest.
I keep an eye on the farms as I pass,
And see who gets behind with the weeds
And who only weeds near the road.
My old mare knows Fletton as well as me,
And that's backwards,
Seeing I was born and bred here
And have been coming once a week ever since I left.
I reckon I shall retire here:
Bly's lively, but it's not the same.
I like to see pride take a fall,
Though there are times when I've been sorry;
But mostly they pretend too much,
Specially at first,
Saying it's only a dispute,
Then giving me a tip to keep quiet:
As if one summons didn't breed another.
There hasn't been so much business in Fletton lately,
Owing mebbe to the war,
But it will come again:
There's a crop of young fools raising.
I've a nice round to-day—

John Overton, Joseph Makins, Alec Barley, Jim Bones
(Who never pays till he's forced),
Jameson
(There's a whisper that he's doing a moonlight flit so I must nab him),
George Todd
(His father'll be mad),
And last of all my two regular customers—
Mr Dobney and the Vicar,
Who've never failed me of late.

146.—Mrs Davis Mogg

I wish Davis would agree to go back to our old home;
We shouldn't have left if he hadn't quarrelled with Sir William,
Who was as nice a man as ever I met.
Our life has been spent among strangers,
And living at enmity with people is horrible:
I sometimes think Davis loves it more than anything
And stops here because it annoys the Earl,
Who's offered enough money, goodness knows.
I hoped when the children grew up, things would be better.
Angelina could have that wealthy Mr Dane any time,
Only she's so queer-tempered:
Arthur ought to marry Mr Smithson's daughter,
She worships him by all accounts,
And I hope he'll take her,
Only there'd be a difficulty about the Church:
If I had my way he should go.
As for Gwinny—
I thought once she had a fancy for that nice Captain Jameson
Who has such handsome moustaches

And reminds me of our Revivalists,
But now I fancy she'll take young Smart.
Davis's latest idea is to run for the District Council;
Mr Winterbourne says all the labourers will vote for him,
But I doubt it.

147.—Adam Sharples

When you look out at night to know if the wind's changed
You see the sails black against the sky,
And, as you watch, new stars come creeping past.
The eldest Creasey boy used to nearly live in the Mill,
And you'd a thought he'd have called to see me,
Seeing how close I am to the Cross Roads.
They're not muchers, them Creaseys,
I could have married Jane the cook,
But preferred Ann Toulson
Whose brother James was very good to me.
I doubt he'll be cut up over Mr Elvin;
They were closer than brothers;
Which ain't mebbe saying much if you look at the Bowleses,
Whose Missis parted 'em in a week.
The Creaseys have never cottoned to me since I gave evidence
As Secretary to the Oddfellows
And got their swindling Jacob sent to jail.
Brother Jeff was courting their Bess,
Though he didn't marry her,
And we've never spoken since,
Not even at Winnie's funeral
(She was done to death by Cunning Jim):
I'd rather have my job than his—

It's a pleasant life taking it all round,
And the miller's pig is always fat.

148.—Enderby Hicks

I've had a row with Mr Dane
Because I charged thirty-one pounds for attending his Curly-Coats:
You can cure horses if they haven't been overfed,
And cattle cure themselves if you let 'em;
But nobody can cure pigs;
They're too stubborn.
That's why some go to Betty Williamson for charms against swine fever:
They might as well get Dr Berry to feel their pulses.
I wish the Feast was over:
Relations-in-law are worse than any,
Taking all and giving nothing;
Isaac Creasey thinks I ought to be glad to get up in the night to look after his pony without making any charge, because he's Annie's uncle,
And that sulky Noah thinks I'm going to him for my drugs.
There's too many Creaseys in Fletton,
And now the Feast's on our house won't be our own.
Annie can't expect the best farmer's wives to know her:
Fancy Mrs Waddy meeting the barmaid or the cook
Or hearing how uncle Jacob caught his death of cold in jail.
I wish Lady Betty wouldn't call me in to see her lap-dog;
I'm not one of the old school like Blow,
A quack who ranked with the shopkeepers
And was eaten by rats.

149.—Nichol Bavin

If only I could get some capital I should make a fortune;
My potato-planting machine is almost finished
And I shall sweep the market;
Look at the labour it will save,
It's worth thousands,
But you can't get our folks to see a good thing:
Not one of them will risk a miserable hundred.
Perhaps a stranger like Mr Longthorne would invest in it,
They say he's rich
(He'd need to be if he's bought Deadman's Ground),
Or that little Belgian might—
They say his wife is living with a General in London,
So he must have plenty of money.
I'm sick of the cycle business!
Why don't the farmers order their cars through me?
They're rolling in money and all buying the latest,
But I only have the repairs;
Of course if I get the agency for these petrol tractors
That would be a horse of another colour:
Enderby, Townsend, and Swinton are after it,
But Townsend's too stand-offish
Just because his father had the trade before him,
While Swinton's a back number.
Father-in-law's waiting for me at the corner with his nose in the air,
Looking at an aeroplane, I'll be bound,
So I must slip out and 'have one';
He's very interested in my invention,
And if it wasn't for him I should have lost heart.
I wish his daughter took after him:
Mary's always nagging at me to speak to Tom;
I tell her he'd knock my head off,

And serve me right;
What the devil has it to do with anybody whether he's
married or not!
I don't see how he could better himself—
Indeed there's times when I fancy he has the best of
it;
Poor old Ruston spends his days in the pubs to keep
away from *his* Missis.
Wright's man from the Bly garage called just now for
petrol
And told me, as a dead secret, he was coming over this
evening to pick up Jameson the Salvationer on
Roundhead Rise:
I wonder what he's up to!
I've a mind to stroll along and see:
If Arthur Mogg'll come I will.

150.—Mrs Frederick Dobney

I'm sure my petition will be answered
And Ellen brought to repentance:
Our saintly Mr Tyrell says I have a great gift of
prayer,
And often asks my help above;
I have been instrumental more than once in aiding
him materially.
He will sit on my right hand at tea on Thurs-
day,
A great privilege, which Maria Creasey and Jemima
Bowles will never enjoy,
Push as they may with their trumpery silver.
We Keys are an old Fletton family
And breeding tells.
The Dobneys are a good family too,
Descended from the Huguenots who fled from perse-
cution,

But as Fletton couldn't pronounce 'D'Aubigny' it
was vulgarised.
I always wanted Frederick to change it back;
There is something so nice about the old French
nobility,
Especially when it's wedded to the True Faith:
He hopes to retire soon from business and I shall
press him then strongly.
I hear that Mr Longthorne is a Baptist as well as a
Homœopath,
And though he's only a General and not a Calvinist
'Tis near enough to claim him,
And I will send a special invitation for the Anniversary.
It would be a sprag in Isaac Creasey's wheel,
Especially after his failure with that wicked Belgian,
Who, I am certain, is a Jesuit in disguise,
Come to mark down the most faithful Protestants.
This evening I must talk to Lizzie,
Who is dreadfully headstrong
And refuses to discuss her future;
Things are *not right* between her and George Todd:
If Peter Todd isn't careful there'll be a Breach of
Promise;
We will pursue him to the bitter end.

151.—Mrs Samuel Waddy

Ellen Dobney fancies I'm going to side with her,
But the sooner she leaves Fletton the better:
We want no scandals at the Toft.
What would Sam's brother Job have said if he'd lived
To see his daughter come to this ?
(And her mother a Todd).
How glad I am Hamilton Dring didn't marry her;
Poor Hammy never got over my refusal,
And Lucy Ambrose will never content him.

I should have liked Hammy,
But he was not only a dreamer
He's stubborn as well.
I shall have Samuel on the District Council next year
And on the County Council in three.
I don't mean to fold my arms like Hepzibah Bowles,
Who's all for show and will ruin brother Thomas:
Jemima would make three of her,
For the Hodgsons are a good stock,
And she picked the right one of the two.
I tell nephew Oliver if he'll stay here I'll marry him
to the little Smithson,
Who will have a handsome fortune,
But he's spoiled by women—
Though that's not his fault,
As I told Mrs Lorne when she hinted I oughtn't to
have him at the Toft.

152.—Bob Cutts

Bennington's just trundled up the Mill Lane on his
tricycle;
If the old goat keeps going
And if plenty of the shopkeepers and tradesmen plump
for him
And if he draws only some of the farmers
I stand a chance.
They turned me out for speaking by the Pump,
But they daren't stop me speaking there to-day:
What *would* Fletton say if I got in!
Ann swears we're descended from one of the old
Earls, but I don't believe it.
It's many a long year since I left the old village
To be 'prenticed to 'Snip' Maplethorpe's uncle Zach
at Bly;
And Fletton's been asleep ever since:

Now I've come back to wake it up.
We've dished the Rads already,
And in good time will dish the gentry;
Meanwhile we'll keep things alive by showing 'em up;
It's to be gloves off and no nonsense.
I know all about Lord Fitz getting Mogg's girl in the family way,
And it shall be spread with other spicy tales.
They're as immoral as cats, these gentry;
Munks says they've parties at the Towers
Where everybody is forced to swap wives
(Which must lead to cross-breeding);
Not that I care a damn,
Only it goes down well with the Chapels.
Club-Foot Georgy's got a good idea:
All the labourers are to swear they're voting Tory,
So they'll get a holiday and a motor-ride and free beer,
And then plump for me just the same:
I reckon Georgy's a match for his master.
Meanwhile we'll go on spreading our War Cry:
A sovereign's the pay for a seven-hours' day,
Which ought to fetch 'em!
If we get a Labour Government we shall do something;
All our young chaps needn't go into the towns then,
Because we'd keep them on the land:
Instead of a dozen big farmers who are no use to any one
We could have a hundred holdings of a hundred acres each in Fletton,
Raising fifty times the food and using fifty times the labour;
Which would be the saving of Old England.

153.—John Hodgson

What yer doing there, Thomas ?
Washing the trap!
That be danged for a tale!
Pop her out in the rain,
Here's a shower coming, won't that wash your trap ?
A-course it will—
What's that ?
Master's down the lane
And said you must have it ready by he come back ?
Hearken to me, my lad,
I'm your master: is that plain ?
Them as doesn't heed me has to pack
And go elsewhere and start all over again,
So let's have no more chelp;
Pike off young chap
Into yon field of mangolds by the lane.

Morning, Master, we're going to have a shower;
I told young Holmes to pop your trap outside
So as the rain could wash it for an hour:
What say ?
Can he bide to wash the trap himself ?
A-course he can,
The mangolds in yon field can easy wait;
What's it matter if the weeds does choke 'em ?
You can go round with your spud and poke 'em;
Can I find another man ?
No doubt I can;
I shall find one mebbe swinging on a gate
Or pretending to be a scare-crow in a gap;
We shan't stop short for a man;
I could make one out of potato-bags and bran;
But we needn't bother about yon weeds;
Let 'em wait!

What say ? *It doesn't matter about the trap?*
Off with you, Thomas, to the mangolds straight.

Yonder he goes, poor Master, down the lane,
Slapping his leggings with his fancy cane,
His head bent forward, thinking no doubt as how
It all depends on *him* who follows the plough;
Why . . . bless your heart!
He knows no more about it than a babe unborn,
Neither who's among the turnips nor among the corn;
He never dreams who has the teams;
He hardly knows one horse from another;
If I told him as ' Blossom ' was ' Tinker's ' brother
(What stands beside him in the stall)
He'd nod his head—that's all.
He rides to hounds with his boots all shining
In coat and breeches with fancy lining
Got up like Agent, and t'other kings;
Not bothering his head about common things
Like crows or weeds
Or drilling small seeds.
To-night he'll be playing at cards with the rest,
While I shall be planning the work for the best,
And when about five we are feeding the horses
He'll slip into bed to forget all his losses;
When they ask him however he puzzles to do it
He tells them it only wants brains putting to it;
If it wasn't for me getting up about three
All his brains wouldn't manage next harvest to see.
I do believe he thinks he knows the way,
By simply riding over once a day,
To manage all the men, the crops, the land,
With forty thousand other things on hand
What need a foreman's never-sleeping eyes.
I go round to his window in the morning,
Just when the sun is dawning,
He pops his head out, looking wondrous wise:

What's the weather like, John ?—fair to middling ?
You'll start the regular gang potato-riddling ;
How's my old mare ?
The fence in yon far wheat-field needs attention,
Here's lots of other jobs I want to mention ;
If you can keep 'em busy for a bit,
I'll tell you later all the rest of it ;
Just now—I think I'll get back into bed. . . .
In goes his head.

And yet, you know, the master has some sense,
He don't rush like a bullock at a fence;
When strangers want to buy or sell a horse
He keeps one eye fixed fast on me all right,
Saving himself a mortal deal of loss.
A quiet nod or wink from me goes straight;
I always handle him the right way round,
And wouldn't pass a rick-backed horse for sound,
No! not for twenty tips of twenty pound;
Not all the money hoarded round about
Would ever make me sell our master out.
What's more, he somehow has the sense to see
It's better as I don't have to agree;
When I be in the right and he be wrong
He makes no song
Because he knows I never mean him harm;
And that's the secret how to run a farm.

Then there's the Missis, bless her pretty face!
Thinks she's that practical about the place
With cottage-drains and 'doctoring the case'
But she's that pleasant-faced and open-hearted
You can't say *No* when once she's fairly started;
You never mind
Her opening our little bedroom windows
So as our tender chests (she says) 'll harden,
Nor even taking men in harvest time
To milk her cows or dig the kitchen-garden

Or feed her hens on lime.
No! Our young Missis does her level best:
Mebbe it ain't much good, but we don't tell;
It helps to keep her quiet: for the rest—
If she knows nowt . . . perhaps . . . it's just as well.

The secret of good management, perhaps,
Lays all in knowing how to treat your chaps,
Most of them's mortal bad, a few is good,
And all of them has heads like lumps of wood;
You never know what mischief'll be brewing,
And work's the last thing as you'll catch 'em doing.
But our men ain't much chance to shirk,
'Coz I know what's a fair day's work;
Good reason why—I started low—
The jobs is few as I don't know;
I know how much a man can plough,
How long it takes to milk a cow,
Who's gone and done a fair day's share,
Who's holding back and doesn't care,
Who wants a word of praise to help,
And who wants sacking for his chelp.
Some men 'ud work until they burst,
Others 'ud see you further first;
Some of 'em tries to do what's right,
Others want watching day and night:
When you know how to manage men
You're fit for farming in the Fen.

The land! I love it! As I lay in bed
I can see each foot of it in my head;
I know where every sheep and bullock lays,
And watches them in fancy where they graze;
I know what water stands in every dyke,
Blindfold I'd take you anywhere you like;
Nowt lives nor moves but what I know about it,
What's done is by my leave, nowt's done without it;

I send the horse to plough, the man to hoe;
Nothing can grow
But I've the sowing and the tending of it:
It's my farm, isn't it?
A-course it be,
I reckon as it fair belongs to me.
I love to watch the ploughing up for wheat,
The furrows turning regular, fit to eat,
All brown and mellow, straight as any arrow,
It stirs you to the middle of your marrow;
The crows behind the plough, all hungry, hopping,
The horses keeping step and never stopping,
The steam uprising from their backs to meet
Tom Burrow's frosty breath. . . .
It would be death
To take me from it now, I love it so;
I only ask to stop and watch things grow.

When I be dead and gone to Heaven—
(Of that I ain't no fear—
They must have foremen there to lend a hand)
There mayn't be beer
Nor yet no 'bacca (Parson says there won't);
But there must be land,
Else where would they stand?
And if there's farming, some one must be got
To see it's done according to the rules.
There'll be plenty of masters and such-like helpless tools,
But decent foremen's scarce and worth their keep,
Just as a good shepherd's wanted with the sheep.
It's the same in t'other place—
Down Below—
Where idle foremen and saucy masters go—
That's bad clay land with neither drainage nor labour,
Baking summers and wet harvests and old Nick for neighbour;

Where them as had good farms and let 'em run to
weeds,
Will plough without horses and think about their evil
deeds,
While docks and thistles shoot up nine foot high
And nowt but crows and hailstorms fill the sky.
But as for me . . . if I don't go—who should ?
I've done my duty, isn't that no good ?
Go round our place;
I can look anybody in the face;
The horses in good heart, hardly no twitch,
The gates and fences sound, and every ditch
Is cleaned and drained and roaded inside out;
Our stock's as good as any hereabout;
If I don't go—no question—straight up there,
Nobody couldn't, not in all the Shire.

But when I'm there I shan't lay in the sun,
Nor yet sit on the grass with a harp in my hand;
I shall be plotting as I've always done,
Planning and working away for all I'm worth,
Throng on the best job either in heaven or earth:
What's that ?
Why . . . farming the land!

154.—Peter Harrod

By Hordle Wood this morning as the sun was rising
I stopped to light my pipe;
It was that still, you could hear everything—
Birds piping, rabbits stirring, and all the little sounds
of leaves and twigs when the trees wake;
A mist cleared off the blue, the sun was red as fire,
there was a fresh smell of turned up earth, and
my smoke curled in the quiet air:
Thinks I, You don't want no better world than this.

155.—Mrs Oliver Barley

I wish Oliver had never been converted to a Blue-Ribboner;
He certainly used to beat me Saturday nights,
And there was times we didn't know which way to turn,
But he was good-natured when sober and would do anything to make it up:
Now he nags all day and most of the night.
We may be richer but I don't see any of it,
And in the evenings, when he remembers how jolly he used to be with his old friends,
He sits by the fire so savage that nobody dare speak.

156.—Jane Smithson

If it wasn't for Auntie Hilda I should have run away,
But since she took Mother's place here
She's been more than a mother to me.
Dad calls her an old sow,
But how different she is to Aunt Naomi
Who was only a Jackson,
With her thirteen dirty children.
Auntie Hilda says it's wrong of Dad to force me to marry George Todd,
Specially when he's engaged to Lizzie Dobney:
I don't like George Todd,
And Lizzie's my friend;
She hates Violet Challands as much as me.
I shall break the great news to her this afternoon:
Norman made me promise not to tell a soul,
But she's different;
And of course I *had* to tell Auntie Hilda
Or I should never have managed.

We hadn't much time to arrange
Because Dad only sprung it on me at tea-time yesterday,
And I only saw Norman coming home from the Feast.
I admired him for months and months
And never dreamt he'd look my way;
He's so handsome,
And has such a beautiful voice when he speaks in the street
You'd think everybody would stop and listen,
Only he's lonely and unhappy.
Fancy him loving poor little me!
(He's never cared for any girl before,
Having his old mother to support.)
He will be on Roundhead Rise at ten to-night with a closed car,
And we shall be married quietly in London at a Registry Office.
He says after Dad's got over the shock he's bound to forgive us:
I didn't think he would
'Coz he's not the forgiving sort,
But Norman says they always do in these cases.

157.—The Viscount (II)

I must have been dreaming—
But—no wonder!
For there's such an air of unreality about this place
That sometimes I feel sceptical about the whole matter:
Mother was invented by George Meredith,
Uncle Maurice by Besant, Father by Thackeray, Fitz by Kipling, Eustace by Charles Garvice, and Betty by . . . the Devil,

Whilst the villagers are nothing but Dickens:
I wonder if anybody ever pictured me.
Although Shakespeare showed no trace of deep thought
he sometimes struck a happy phrase,
And I certainly feel with Hamlet: *The time is out of joint;*
O cursed spite, that ever I was born to set it right!
Not that there's any trouble between *my* parents;
Mother's far too strong and has the stage to herself:
Those Quaker bankers gave more than their millions to the Cootes,
And, mixed with father's idealism, I have a touch of the Fortescue hard-headedness.
I couldn't copy Christopher Harbord or 'Reformation' Tunny in their futile efforts to part the body of the Feudal System from its spirit;
I'm willing enough to destroy it if I had a lever,
But it stands firm as Ghizeh's Pyramid,
Deep-rooted in abomination—
Yet unassailable as that aeroplane.
The two worst classes of employers in our nation,
Landlords and shipowners,
Who always shamefully sweated their workers,
Have made colossal fortunes from the war;
Yet I see nothing to upset them.
If there was any chance with Labour I'd join,
But they're bigger asses than the Liberals,
Replacing organised humbug with a selfish *naïveté* that is merely revolting.
The Socialist Intelligentza offers Labour nothing but nationalisation,
And never faces the problem:
You can either give the worker land,
Abolishing him thereby;

Take the small-holder and peasant-owner into the Labour Party;
Or simply back worker against employer on the usual Trade Union lines
Without trying to change their relative positions.
Labour ignores the first two because it fears small proprietors will always be anti-Socialists,
And pins itself to the Status Quo,
Which it proposes to perpetuate by State Purchase.
Fitz won't hesitate to fight for Property:
That's what the world wants, I suppose;
Men who believe and hit hard.

158.—Georgina Longthorne

It's all very well for Noah Creasey to say the babies don't die
(The dough-faced creature—he makes me shudder!)
But they ought
(And if it wasn't for the fresh air they would)
According to all text-books:
What goes on in Fletton would make the hair of my old Sanitation and Midwifery Instructors stand on end.
Doctor Berry doesn't support me,
Whilst Widow King has murdered more than a dozen babies since I've been here;
She attends illegitimates and quietly smothers them before I get wind of the birth,
And owing to collusion between Doctor Berry and Inspector Daniels nothing is done.
You might, of course, say, like the Doctor, they're better dead,
Or like the Inspector, that you don't want useless scandals
(At least, that's what I hear they say),

But it's murder!
If Mrs Lorne wasn't so hateful I'd tell her,
She's always trying to find out,
But it's very hard to prove anything
And I don't want to be dismissed in disgrace from my first post.
In some ways I like this village despite its horrors,
Which, after all, are no worse than what goes on in Whitechapel,
Within a stone's throw of the old 'London.'
It's very restful here, and out of the world,
(Neither Zeppelins nor daily papers come near)
Provided you're not a labourer's or small-holder's wife:
Working women are merely slaves in the country,
Which men arrange and run for themselves
Without any half-holidays or Factory Acts.
Mrs Lorne and (sometimes) the Countess go visiting
And fancy they know Fletton thoroughly;
They know nothing whatever.
The only reminder of London,
Besides my friend Emma Burtonshaw,
Is that Salvationist Captain,
Who's a rascal if ever I saw one.
If Uncle Andrew has really bought that farm with the sinister name it will be nice,
Though what Aunt Emily will say to Fletton is a puzzle:
She'll have a good deal to say if I know her,
And so will Fletton.
I must bike down the Fen to see Mrs Hodgson to-day,
She looks worn out, poor creature:
The District Council sweat her husband worse than any single farmer dare.

159.—Hamilcar Townsend

I'm going to Bly Grammar School after the holidays;
Monty Ferrett's been for two terms and says it's marvellous;
He's coming home for the Feast to-day with his Dad,
Who drives in every morning;
Their blood mare does the journey in thirty-nine minutes,
And that's travelling.
You'd think Mr Ferrett would have a motor
But father says he's too old-fashioned:
Father doesn't like him—
He says if it hadn't been for him we should have the telephone in Fletton.
(There's an aeroplane!)
Monty'll be rich when Mr Ferrett dies;
He says he shall have a Rolls-Royce, a sporting Vauxhall, and a baby run-about:
I'd be content with a motor-cycle like Mr Bavin's.
I do miss Monty because we had such times;
At Fox and Hounds nobody could catch us:
We had a secret run across Mr Rowett's garden, through the Spinney, behind the Police Station, and out by the Infant School.
We built a wonderful Verdun fort out of hay-bales, with trenches and an underground passage;
Lots of folks came to see it until Mr Abe Smart carted it off:
I begged him not but he said it was for the Front, so it had to be.
Monty was the General, me the Colonel, and Jimmy Dodds the army.
Now Jimmie's ratted to Church and works at the Vicarage
So I'm not so sorry to go as I might have been.

Fletton's a wonderful village:
There's Mr Burrows from America where he was nearly scalped; Mr Swinton who can shoe a horse quicker'n anybody for miles and let's you blow the bellows; Mr Lowe what knows everything about ancient Fletton and is writing a book on it; Joe Makins, Lord Fitz, Butler Atkin, Peg-Leg Jackson, and Mr Daniels;
To say nothing of a real live Witch.
Father says we're the old original stamp that's dying out.
Mother thinks Fletton's good enough and so does Uncle Todd;
She hates me playing with our labourers' boys,
But who else is there now Monty's gone?
Father says the War'll keep on for twenty years
And Monty's promised to get me a Commission with his.
At the Grammar School they have manœuvres on the Common with cut-down rifles and their own officers—
Won't it be great!
The worst is I shan't see Miss Harker coming from School;
I mostly manage to meet her between the Golden Cross and the Bank,
My heart gives a bump and then stops:
She must notice how I'm always there;
If only I dare speak I'd say good-bye,
Only my breath goes.

160.—Annie Hicks

It's a big step to cut away from family and Chapel,
But Hepzibah Bowles and that clever Mrs Waddy have,

So why shouldn't I ?
We shall never rise in Fletton till we've done it:
Look at the difference between the two Bowleses.
My relations swarm everywhere like black beetles,
And Emmanuel's the only one who might do us credit,
Because he may get a knighthood
Providing he doesn't marry a servant before we can stop him.
What the Chapel would say I can't imagine—
I can though—
I should be publicly prayed over by my old goat of an uncle:
It would be a blow for the stuck-up Dobneys.
Bessy Key is boasting she'll take young Hemsley to Church,
Though she hasn't got him yet.
After all, the Hicks were Church,
At least they never went to Chapel,
And a Surgeon-Veterinary ought to mix with the best farmers.
We have to be extra careful, as we've followed that disgusting bachelor
Who left the house so filthy
And was eaten by rats.

161.—Mrs Wallace Ruston

I wish we lived somewhere else;
Everybody's related to everybody
And you never know what's going to get out.
Nichol Bavin comes of a bad stock;
Sister Amelia has her daughter back on her hands;
Jane Woolerton's got a skeleton in her cupboard,
And never a day passes but I fear Thompson will have some shocking scandal.

My only respectable relation, Winterbourne,
(Whose sister Keziah was worn to death by Thompson)
Tries to take the bread from my mouth;
What right have Jesse Munks and him to sell goods
from door to door for miles around ?
They'd have ruined me before now
If I hadn't been getting most of Dobney's custom :
As it is we just keep the roof over our heads,
And so long as the Co-operatives and the telephone
keep away I think we shall manage.
I might as well be a widow for what good Wallace is;
If ever a woman laboured with a man it's me;
Never a night he doesn't hear the truth about himself,
Unless he's too ashamed to come home
And spends the night with Peg-Leg Jackson—
Or so he says—
Though I've had suspicions lately that he has some
other bedmate.
His wicked uncle Japhet at the Coach and Horses,
Who daren't cross the Bridge at his very door
(For fear of Providence no doubt),
Is said to say that Wallace keeps away from him for a
reason he doesn't care to give:
I wish I knew what it was.

162.—Will Bavin

Fancy the Missis wanting me to be butler as well,
And offering another ten shillings:
What about the Feast and Milly Jackson!
Her Aunt Naomi's always at her to better herself—
She's nobody anyway,
Malachi Smithson's only a day labourer for his brother
Who won't leave them any of *his* money.
Milly won't do so badly
Because I'm not going to stop as a chauffeur,

Nor yet as a labourer like Tom,
Nor a shopkeeper like Nichol,
Whose potato-planter isn't worth a damn—
It misses one in every three,
And even Morton Enderby turns his nose up at it.
I'm going to be a farmer;
I've saved a lot of money already
And I'm only twenty-two,
That's why I stop here and fool about with electric churns and the like
Under the biggest ass in England.
Mind you, he got me off the Army:
Why should I go when all the farmers' sons don't?
I'd do nearly anything for money except turn butler,
But I'm laughed at plenty as it is when I drive through the village in this beastly uniform,
And if I started another I should never hear the last of it at Stennett's on Saturday nights.
Nichol may laugh,
But I shan't be dragged off to the Baptists like him—
Milly will come to the Primitives;
She's all against girls converting their husbands.

163.—Joe Cutts (II)

If I looked like a pennorth of soap left out in the sun
And daren't say Bo to a goose,
And wasn't no higher'n my wife's shoulder,
And somebody was caught with her under a gooseberry bush,
And I hadn't the guts to land him one,
I should drown myself.
Dobney's forward enough with the tenants,

Selling his ' good word ' to them that's fool enough to
buy it;
But there's a knot-hole in the office partition,
Thanks to which I've kept account,
And I'm either going to have half or get him kicked
out, on the chance of the job.
The last Chief Clerk,
Eli Gunn,
Feathered his nest, and has a freehold farm at Hordle:
They say old Dobney gave him fifty pounds to get
Herbert in.
I don't know if Uncle Bob standing for Parliament
will hurt me,
But I've only the *Chronicle* work to fall back on
And I don't want to lose this place,
Specially as they look like selling the outlying estates
and buying more round Fletton,
Which would make this office bigger than ever.
I can't understand why we refused Deadman's Ground;
It was offered us at twelve-fifteen an acre
And Todd or Hides would have taken it on;
That swine Rowett's palmed it on to Mr Longthorne
at sixteen pounds
To get a couple of hundred commission;
I've just written a letter to the Londoner,
From ' A Friend '
Telling him he's done brown
And advising him to stop the cheque he'll have paid
on deposit.
I must now polish off this week's dose for the
Chronicle;
My style improves rapidly,
And visitors like Mr Emmanuel Creasey will see that
Fletton is not altogether ignorant.
Then for the Feast, where I may get an interview
with Mr Morgan, and Meg Ambrose will be
waiting.

164.—Ellen Dobney

I should never have stooped to Herbert
But he begged and prayed and promised everything,
While no one else seemed likely:
What a come-down for one that's related to the Todds
and the Waddys.
The little toad sleeps on the parlour sofa now,
Not that I miss him;
I never thought him any use,
But didn't realise how little till I met Bill.
Mind you, Bill was careless;
He ought to have kept his eyes open.
Somebody must have put Lynn Stower on to watch
us
Or how could he have popped in at that moment?
Bill letting Moll go home to her mother's made a
nice mess,
So that I've determined to go to Aunt Marion's
And shall arrange with her this afternoon.
Oliver's been fighting Jack Key about me,
And is clearly struck;
He must be tired of that shameless huzzy who threw
herself at his head,
And when I'm staying at the Toft he will have his
chance:
After all I'm only copying the aristocracy.
If the worst comes to the worst I'll go to London:
That Belgian's wife
(Which probably she isn't)
Is nothing to look at really;
She's slim and has good legs and red lips but no
more:
If she can earn twenty pounds a day I'm sure I
can.

165.—Widow Harker

I don't like foreigners and their ways;
Not that little Borkman's not quiet,
And his money's useful,
Jim being at the War,
But why can't he act like an ordinary human ?
It was to be expected he'd want to sleep with Min,
And he gives her half a crown regular enough
Three times a week;
That's in the way of nature,
But what call had he to speak to *me* about it ?
Did the fool think I shouldn't know
When my room's next to hers and I can hear every
squeak of her bed ?
It's bringing *me* into it that I don't like.
Just the same his boasting about his wife:
She may be doing well
And I'm sure I don't grudge her,
But why talk about it ?
When I kept house for Anthony Woods I didn't talk;
He never had anything to complain of,
Only he was too artful for me
And try as I would I couldn't get caught.
He was feared I should nab him then—
As I should have,
My brothers would have seen to that—
Us Burrowses always stick together.
Sister Susan says her Mary's getting off with Mr
Pinion,
Who's the right sort to lay hold of
And it ought to do them good.
I wish I knew what Parson's after;
He's asked me three times lately after Min's health,
Looking as worried as an old tup with the mange:
What's he want anyway ?

166.—James Toulson

Seeing it's fixed in his mind for Daniel Skinner to make the coffin,
I can't rightly say nothing,
Though 'twill take the old dodderer a month;
But I'd give way in more'n that to please Joe Elvin.
Only this morning he told me he was booked,
Though I tried to persuade him out of it,
But he's falling away at the back of his neck
Which is a sure sign
(Abel Sneath's going the same).
He helped me often in trouble—
There was Sister Ada's affair,
When David Waddy bolted to Australia after being ran-tanned,
And we had to send her after him.
David said he should pay Fletton out,
And I reckon he has
By sending his lad over to run riot amongst the women.
Joe's been more than a brother to me,
Which ain't saying much if you look at the Sharples or the Bowleses.
I'm sure I want nothing to do with my relations-in-law;
Them Stowers are a low-lived lot,
Excepting Jos Swinton's Missis:
As for poor Joe,
He's been more than patient all his life—
Reason why—
Old Job himself couldn't a had a better trial than to have married a Rowett.

167.—Robert Dodds

She wants me to go to Church,
But I ain't going:
Dad built the Chapel, and I've been ever since I could
remember;
I didn't mind about Jimmy,
Seeing it was for his good,
And not wanting to stand in his way,
(Half and half is fair enough),
But I shan't never go myself.
Liz can if she likes:
Women do as they want
So they'll have to pray where they want,
But I doubt she'll work for Wardle:
It would break Dad's heart if he knew.
There'll be trouble at Chapel over this Election
'Coz Mogg wants us to stick to the Liberals
Instead of naturally plumping for Cutts.
If Mogg leaves us we shall have to manage;
Not as he hasn't been wonderful good,
But we can't sell ourselves to nobody;
And me and Winterbourne'll carry on somehow.
Amos Pratt, what married sister-in-law Nancy,
Says Albert Cook's going to come back to us;
But his Missis isn't going to play the harmonium:
His brother John voted against her at the finish,
And if Liz goes to Church, Louisa Atkin will have it.

168.—Moses Bellamy

Chimney sweeping's gone to the devil
Owing to this craze for saving coal,
And I should have been hard put to
If it hadn't been for the market-gardening, what's
looked up rarely of late.

It hasn't been so good indeed since the Potato Boom
What gave me my real start;
I was one of the lucky ones, getting hold of some
Northern Stars early on,
And Tim Williamson paid me a hundred and sixty-
four pounds for the produce.
I married Gladys Stennett within the month
And took two more allotments,
Since when I haven't looked back.
I should keep straight on if there was any hope of a
small holding.
Poor Jerry was with me when I drew Williamson's
cheque;
He didn't half get drunk neither!
It's been on my mind ever since
'Coz I ought to have seen him home to Hordle
Instead of letting Oliver Barley go with him;
They called at the Coach and Horses, as I might have
guessed,
And fell into the one place in the river deep enough
to drown 'em.
Why did Ann pull Barley out instead of Jerry?
She says it was pitch-dark and she only heard one
splash,
But if the truth be ever known
She did pull Jerry out and shoved him back again
Just because he wouldn't be a Baptist:
The old bitch thought she'd duck him for good.

169.—Alfred Cullen

Life's a hard struggle in a place like Fletton
When you can't get a bit of land to help out;
The slaughtering only just keeps me going,
And what I get buying pigs and sheep isn't so much
as you'd think,

Specially when you have to compete with rascals like
Isaac Creasey.
My poor lad never settled down;
He took after his grandmother
Who bolted when Mercy was nine weeks old
And hasn't been heard of to this day.
Guy picked the only place deep enough to drown
him,
Where Bellamy was found,
And Mercy looks at me as if I was to blame.
What could I do?
I'm single-handed,
And it'll be another three years before little Joe can
help.
I did everything I could to please Guy:
When we found Old Blow that Boxing-Day morning,
Froze stiff where he'd fell asleep inside the slaughter-
house,
With his face eaten away by our rats
That run nigh as big as retrievers,
I let Guy help to take him home on a cratch,
Thinking he'd be only too glad
Like I should at his age:
Blessed if he wasn't as sick as a dog;
You can't account for foreign blood.

170.—Matthew Benton

It took me all my time not to speak,
Yet how could I, when Poll's his sister-in-law?
I always knew Thompson was a wrong 'un,
But this is a masterpiece.
Deadman's Ground has been the death of three since
I've lived next door to it,
And will kill lots more unless it's all grassed down:
Rogers cut his throat after slitting his wife's,

And their Aggie died in the Asylum.
There's only about three days a year when you can plough that clay:
Of course Bannister Hides could farm it—
At a price—
He would throw all his machinery in at the proper time;
(He'd know when)
But fancy a stranger learning to farm there:
If it wasn't so terrible it would make you laugh.
I'm off to Bly with Curtis Fullerton
To see Lawyer Walton about the Game;
Fullerton's crazed with the Woods, same as me.
It's very hard to be just outside an Estate,
And to make it harder I've Lord Marshfellowton both east and west of me,
Whose worse'n the Earl
And lives for nothing but Game;
His tenants get nearly all their rent returned:
Good reason why!
The hares are thick as mustard-bugs and the birds thicker.
There's as much food got off my farm as any dozen of his,
Yet they say there's a War on.

171.—Eli Potterton

Parson can say what he likes
But I'm the people's churchwarden, duly appointed,
And I'm agen all Ritualism and crosses;
Old-fashioned ways is good enough for us.
Before we know where we are they'll be shutting the pubs,
Or wanting me to milk my cows by motor
Like young Edgerley who's ruined his herd;

You can put new nozzles on machines
But not new tits on Alderneys.
If only I had a bit of land with the milk-business I should do fine.
It's a shame we can't have it:
Look at my brother-in-law, 'Young' Butler,
What was wounded defending his country,
Yet can't get so much as an allotment;
There's something very wrong, as Moller Holmes says.
Our Vicar had better mind his eye;
They say he's been caught with Tom Bavin's missis,
What's certainly handy at his door;
Susan King heard Mrs Lorne having words with Leah,
And both of 'em was red about the cheek-bones
So there must be something in it.
Tom's a fool not to make her tight at Church;
She's a tempting lass spite of her eight bairns,
And he'll find his mistake before he's done.
You can't be too careful with women,
Specially in a place like Fletton.
When I married Juley Atkins I told her straight:
Your sister Kate, I says,
What wedded Alec Barley;
And your sister Jada, what took Alf Dawson,
Is both a bit fly-by-night;
But I shan't have it:
And I haven't . . .
So far.

172.—Lynn Stower

Trade's bad!
A thirsty looking stranger just passed without turning in;
I expect he's a temperance lecturer,

Though at first I thought I knew his walk.
If you had the Mill Inn, and Fletton was chock full of your relations,
You'd expect they'd visit you;
Yet none of 'em ever sets foot inside the door,
Neither Bob Dodds, Cobbler George, Jos Swinton, Jim Toulson, Horace Atkin, nor Fred Makins,
What's all married my sisters.
I don't say nothing about brother Tom being a Blue-Ribboner because it pays him—
There's sense in that—
And he's promised to get me the offer of Dobney's thirty acres,
Which, Tom says, he's giving up,
Though I can't think why,
For it's not in the way of nature for anybody to give up land:
I expect, though, he's taking a larger farm.
I was hanging about waiting for Tom last Friday night,
And caught Bill Overton and young Mrs Dobney in Tom's greenhouse;
Fair and square I caught 'em!
It was two or three minutes before she spotted me,
And I must say—
But I'd better not,
'Coz Herbert Dobney's warned me for a witness—
I hope it won't interfere with my having that thirty acres.
Once a man gets a start like that he never looks back,
And there's them in Fletton would give their ears for it.
It didn't ought to be so scarce:
Mr Dring says Mr Lowe says at one time there was land went with every house in the village by right,

And there was no landlords, like there ain't in Hordle:
We've been done out of it.
Tom says anyway I shall have a County Council Holding when he gets in,
Which I'll see he does
Or there's no virtue in beer.
I see Cartwright Burrows coming for his quart:
He loves serving summonses does Cart;
I wonder if he ever served one on himself?

173.—Aunt Hilda Smithson

Life's very hard on them that try to do right.
I'm so worried about little Jane I'm almost out of my mind:
How can I let her go off in the middle of the night with a stranger,
Perhaps to be ruined, abandoned, or murdered?
Brother Joseph's bound to get out of me that I knew,
And will be *awfully* cross;
Yet if I tell him, Jane will be forced into the arms of that horrible young Todd
Which would be a great wickedness.
I'd sooner she took Nevil Dane or Arthur Mogg,
Both gentlemanly fellows.
If there was any one to advise me I'd ask them, but there isn't—
Not even Mr Ferrett,
Who's always at his office in Bly.
How I wish Joseph wasn't so rough and I hadn't such a splitting headache.

174.—Maud Overton

It's been hard to decide,
But you can't get on without risking something.
Look at Annie Hicks,
Always making up her mind to go to Church
But never daring.
The time's come for me, however,
And I've decided *not* to go to the Anniversary Tea;
I shall spread the reason to-morrow:
Won't there be a fuss!
I don't mean to mix with shopkeepers always.
It's a good thing there'll be no trouble with John,
Who left the Wesleyans without a word:
That's the advantage of marrying below you;
(So long as they're not fools)
He always swore I should never regret it,
And when he's looked like jibbing at anything I've known exactly what to say.
Things are going well for us now:
Nelly's out of the running
And Eliza will *never* get George Todd;
She's let him be too free.
Herbert's going to get John the offer of the next vacant farm,
Which can't be long;
Father's promised he'd make him do it
And in five years' time we shall be near the top of the tree.

175.—Mrs Osmond Lorne (II)

I've just read a most interesting book of verse by a country rector's wife,
All about the parishioners;

It's what I've always wanted to write,
And I'm sure I can do it better than *that*;
The poems I wrote as a girl were greatly admired.
Fletton's full of picturesque characters:
The widows King and Harker,
Peg-Leg Jackson and Cobbler George,
Old Sarah Jackson who means to break the record,
Inspector Daniels and Mr Hanbury at the Bank
(Who look like twin brothers when they walk out on Sundays),
Bearded ruffians like Enderby and Japhet Ruston
(Who they say daren't cross the Bridge at his door),
Those real villains—Fletcher, Stower, and Rowett—
The postmaster, the sweep, the blacksmith,
Hilton Wells looking all importance
When he's astride a borrowed horse,
Driving that ricketty old engine to a stack-fire,
Betty Williamson, who every one believes is a real witch
And has far more influence in this Pagan village than Osmond:
Something could be made of them all.
Literary worth is far above birth or riches,
And I will do it;
Especially now I've seen how to write poetry without bothering about rhyme or metre,
Just cutting what you have to say into convenient chunks.
I could add artistic touches about the lovely yellow of the mustard plant
And our gorgeous sunsets,
And introduce reflections on moral purity
Using Mary King, or, better still, Jane Smithson—
Who I intend to marry Cousin Ronald.
He's coming on Saturday for a visit
And I hope Adela will take the hint:

It's a pity I can't get her an invitation to the Towers,
She'd think she'd died and gone to Heaven.

176.—Smith Rook and Amos Pratt

What'd he say to you, Amos?

To tell you the truth, Rook, I didn't take no notice. When a chap's cracked you really can't listen.

I says to him, I ignores your ignorant questions, and after that if he'd had any decency he'd a gone. Come nosing round about our Bob. How old was he? What the devil has it to do with anybody but me?

I told him I was appointed to buy pigs for the Army, and he had the cheek to say as that made no difference. What'd be the good of me going for a common soldier when I'm doing expert duty what very few could do?

Expert duty! That's the idea! Who's going to carry on this farm if you take our Bob away, I says. He reckoned as I must do Bob's work, and muttered something about getting my weight down. How could I do Bob's work and all my own plotting and planning as well? It's brain work that tells.

And what a saucy chap he was. Talked about me hiding behind my job; said others could do it what wasn't eligible. I'll report you to Captain Wilfred, I says at last. Do, says he. I will, says I. I would, says he; and at that he called me a shirker. Now I ask you straight, if I went, could anybody do my job?

No, Amos, except p'raps me.

And you couldn't be spared from your farm.

Well—a-course—if you was *really* going, I could try to do both.

Now, farmer ! I thought you was a friend.

So I am, Amos, so I am.

'Twouldn't be very friendly to take my job away. But you wouldn't get it, so no matter. I asked that chap straight, Are you after my job of pig-buying for the Government ? and he was so took aback he couldn't answer.

I gave it him straight too. If Bob goes, I says, what about the food for the army ? Tell me where it's coming from, I says. But did he ? No. Slobbered about the war coming first. Wanted to see Bob, but I said he was at Holt Fair. To finish up he wanted to know why I hadn't turned special constable. I've enough to do with growing food for the army, I says. But you're getting well paid for it, says he, and at that I set the dog on him.

Good for you, Rook!

The coward had a stick, and nothing happened. Stood there chalking it down in a book. Go on, I says; put it down about the food. I'm putting you down, he says, for what I take you to be. And what may that be, I asks. Never mind, says he. As for your boy, he says, they're going to fetch such as him. Force ? I says. Force ? But that ain't English. Oh, yes, it is, says he.

I hadn't no dog, but I gave him such a nasty look, he turned as white as a sheet. Me a coward ? It's enough to make me—to make me—

'List ?

Never ! They shan't say I was forced. If I didn't go before, I won't now. Talking about other countries where all the men had gone and the women did the work. But we're in England, I

says, where folk ain't goin' to be interfered with. Still—you know—

Yes ?

If they *should* fetch you, Amos, what about your pig trade ? You couldn't let your connection go to pot.

Certainly not.

If you told me where you sold the pigs and what profit you made and a few things like that—d'ye see—me being your oldest friend, I'd carry on for you.

But what about when I come back ?

You mightn't.

That's a nice thing to say.

Facts is facts, Amos, and very few *will* get home. I'm not afraid to look the truth in the face.

'Coz you're not in any fear of being took.

That makes no difference at all. As I was saying—*if* you should come back, we could be partners.

What do you take me for, Rook ?

Please yourself. But you'll have to go, Amos. Surely you won't wait to be fetched ?

You go yourself.

If I wasn't long past the age I should have gone before this.

You ain't so very much past. They'd take you if you offered.

As I was saying, if I was fit and if it wasn't for the importance of growing food for the army, I *should*.

My job's as important as yours.

It isn't us as'll settle that, Amos. Just think my offer over. You'll have time to get me into the tricks before you're fetched. I don't mind how much I do so long as it's for the country.

177.—David Todd

It was an artful notion of Dad's to swap all our fit
young labourers for old men and cripples;
Neither him nor me nor George has run short of a
hand in consequence,
Which is more'n can be said of any other big farmer.
We've plenty to bother us without,
As I told that foxy Captain who came to buy my
forage:
(He was a pawnbroker before the war)
He made George sit up,
Though of course anybody could do that,
And Mother Dobney won't be the least by the look
of things.
When I had my little bother, a fiver to Daniels, another
to Widow King, and twenty pounds to the old
man settled all:
Money's very useful at times.
For all that I shan't marry for money next time.
I only hope Jess will live long enough to get the old
boy's brass;
It'll be a near thing—
They're a sickly pair, the Whites, father and daughter,
I should be able then to start a racing stable and see
my colours at Churt Park.
When Dad's gone I shall stand easy first in Fletton:
There's nobody to beat, of course;
Young Dane's a calf, little Hides a squinny, poor
George is just poor George, and as for Pinion,
Edgerley, and Art Mogg—
By the Blood-Red Beet!
I'd take 'em on together with one hand.
Dad says old Dobney and John Overton will go down
directly,
And has spoken to the Agent;

Dobney's thirty acres lie handy for George, while
Overton's is just right for me:
He's farmed it well, I must say,
And I shall offer him a foreman's job.
Mine's not a bad life:
Hunting first, then shooting, then coursing, with
billiards at the Golden Cross, a day's racing, a
bit of steeplechasing, sales—when they're on,
pigeon-shooting matches, wild duck at Washover,
skating in winter, and two days a week at Bly—
with a night now and then;
You don't have such a bad time, all things considered.

178.—Montague Ferrett

Dan *can* drive;
Of course Jenny's a wonderful mare,
But it's downhill eight miles and you've to watch every
yard.
I wish he'd let me take the reins into Fletton,
But I don't like to ask him:
However, he *has* got me a day's holiday for the
Feast.
I'm glad my first term's nearly over:
Ham Townsend'll be a muff when he starts;
You don't like it at first among so many strangers:
Some of the boys had never heard of Dad.
I wish he would get a motor;
We used to reckon this hooded gig with its rubber-
tyres and ball-bearings the very last word:
I wonder why fathers never do what folks think they
might.
Hordle Waste is bare and lonely;
They say highwaymen used to hide here and pounce,
There's an aeroplane!
And there's Fletton;

The Church, the Mill, the Towers, the Coach and Horses.
You can't see our house for trees,
But that's Ham's with the steep slated roof
And the stackyard where we used to play at kids' games.
Ham jumped off a stack higher'n that with the gig-umbrella for a parachute and smashed it.
There's Poll and Meg Ambrose by the Bridge;
Why aren't they on the Feast Ground ?
Mr Glover just went by on his ' Indian ';
I thought at first it was Veterinary Hicks.
There's the School!
I wonder if Mr Dring has altered any ?
It seems years instead of months since I left.
Fletton's got no lights, no water, no telephone, no movies, no railway, no street names,
Yet—somehow—I'm glad to be back:
Everybody knows you and you know everybody.

179—Aaron Tharp

(*Notes found by the Vicar in a book which he had lent him*)

I am very susceptible to sounds.
Ear—not eye—moves me.
Likes : Threshing-machines. Aeroplanes. Swinton's anvil. Silly Sam's concertina. Jacob Harvey's voice. Also Tom Burrows's and the Vicar's. Children playing in the school-ground. Hordle Church bells. High wind in trees in spring—but not in autumn.

Dislikes : Toulson's steam saw. Rowett's voice. Pig-killing. Branches of trees scratching a zinc roof. Most women laughing.

Fletton Church bells (two are lead, one is tin).
(*Note by Vicar :* I cannot agree with Tharp.)
In frosty weather most sounds are pleasing.
I wonder why a clear night in winter is so full of magic . . .
The silence, the stars, and a dog's staccato bark very far away.
I've come to the conclusion that Bach is fool proof, for even Mary Wilders can't spoil him. How the lush Mendelssohn suits her.

180.—Mrs Edgerley

The Viscount's just such another noodle, yet he never speaks,
And I'm pestered by the Dane boy who doesn't even know what he wants;
I hate his silly pictures and effeminate ways.
If I could talk to Lord Fitz we should soon be friends,
And he'd get me into the Tennis Club
And Algy into the County Club,
When we should be asked to the County Ball and Bly would be open:
It's shut now,
Slammed by that insolent Lady Betty who thinks she can do *anything*
(She can, really, that's what's so vexing).
It doesn't comfort me to watch the Pinions squirm;
They're impossible anyway.
I will get in, I will! I will!! I will!!!
Algy's a fool, but a manageable one;
He amuses himself with his toys, but that's better than women or gambling,

And by keeping aloof in Fletton there is nothing to hold us back when the door opens:
Exclusiveness always pays.
I'm dining at the Pinions, this once, to show her how to dress.
How beautifully the Countess squashes the presumptuous;
It's an education.

181.—Morton Enderby

I've got him!
The beard bothered me at first, but I'm not to be beat;
He's the image of Hosea Berry the schoolmaster, who left on account of being drunk on Examination Day;
And that will be his lad Cyrus what turned engine-driver:
He must be on an express by his clothes
(I shall hear to-night what he's after).
What was I planning when that aeroplane made me turn and catch sight of young Berry?
Oh, yes! A Sale.
Mr Hanbury's at me to draw my horns in,
And though I explained what a lot of valuable stock I had as security, and how necessary it was for me to keep up my connection, and what a grand profit I should make when I'd had time to mend things up, he *wouldn't* listen:
That's Hanbury all over;
He looks at you as if he never believed anything.
I must speak to Creasey or Stower;
Stower's the smartest auctioneer, but Creasey has a better connection.

If I spend a week or two in the yard here, I dare say
I can get a lot of bargains ready,
Stuff I've picked up at sales and privately and had no
time to touch:
Time's what I'm always short of.
It's no good Townsend bothering me about his seed-
drill;
Mrs Lorne's mower and Mrs Dring's mangle and
Todd's jackstraw and Barley's gun come before
him;
Townsend must be patient:
In fact everybody'll have to be patient
Just 'coz Hanbury won't
(Selfish I call him).
As for Bavin's planter he keep on about,
I told him if he *would* use belts instead of chains she'd
jib at the corners:
You have to be practical to understand.
If I'd been a farmer, as I ought, and will, when I
retire if I've luck, I'd have all my inventions at
work;
Not heavy stuff like Hides or gimcrack contrivances
like Edgerley, but cunning dodges to save
labour.
I see the Missis squawking so there must be a cus-
tomer in the shop:
They may wait.

182.—Harriet Holmes

I wish we didn't live in Paradise Row next Ann Cutts;
She's not at all respectable, and how Mrs Lorne can
visit her I don't know;
I don't much fancy her calling here afterwards.
Brother Bill's new missis Nell Dobney'll be just such
another.

Moller can say what he likes, but I shall work for Mr Wardle—
Just put him alongside Bennington or that low Cutts!
Liz Dodds agrees with me.
I'm all for being respectable, which is more than some of the Overtons can manage;
It's no joke rearing six children these days:
Moller's very good about it, I must say,
And brings home every copper of his thirty-two shillings,
But what's that to keep eight souls in their bodies?
It doesn't go as far as fifteen shillings before the war.
When you've paid for rent, fresh meat, coal, butter, bread, sugar, milk, tea, potatoes, paraffin, matches, boot-mending, pig-food, club, doctor, candles, dripping, flour, rice, jam, treacle, salt, soap, soda, and starch, and put something by for clothes and new boots, there isn't much left for frills
As brother John's wife may find one of these days.
To be married to a farm-labourer's no bottle until the eldest begins to earn.
If it wasn't for Mr Lowe giving me coal, and Jesse Munks letting the insurance run, and Mr Woolerton being easy about the bill behind his missis's back, I don't know what I *should* do.
If Moller had my job we should hear less about Unions and uppishness;
He'd be thankful to take what he could get,
Same as his brothers Reuben and Arthur at the Towers.

183.—Cyrus Berry, M.I.C.E.

Fletton hasn't changed one jot in twenty years:
Morton Enderby stands amongst his junk wondering what he shall mend first;
His beard's as black as ever and his voice no doubt as suave.
He doesn't know me though he stared so.
I'm glad I made the detour on my tramp to look up Cousin Josephus:
How it all comes back!
I didn't live here so very long, but they were the impressionable years,
And though I've roamed the world over it seems but yesterday;
I think that was my happiest time.
There's Jacob Harvey by the Golden Cross,
There's Julius Morgan in his white hat talking to Moses Skinner,
And there, by gum! is Cartwright Burrows;
Same ramshackle pony-trap, same errand, no doubt same victims:
It makes me feel almost sentimental.
The modified Feudal System that you get here in perfection is so naturally adapted by growth that nothing can shake it;
Industrialism is only an eddy born of cheap coal,
Whose sceptre the Twentieth Century has already passed to America,
And without oil or water power England will dwindle to fifteen millions.
Why not?
When Leeds, Liverpool, and the other toadstools and cesspools are blotted out, Fletton will be here;
No revolution could affect it;

And though Socialism will vanish with the urban proletariat,
In the year 2500 Enderbys, Burrowses, and Cootes will be doing much the same things in much the same way:
Especially Cootes.
It's not by chance that the most powerful aristocracy the world's ever seen has placed its all in land, regardless of low returns and depressions;
The world cost of food is rising and will rise indefinitely,
And the price and security of land will be steadily enhanced.
Old Jenkins used to tell how his great-grandfather would tell how *his* great-grandfather saw the Puritans charge the King's troops down Roundhead Rise,
And another two or three stretches would probably take him back to the Conquest—
Or the Druids.
Shall I patronise Harvey or trust to Josephus?
Harvey always had good beer.

184.—Widow Key

Fletton isn't what it was!
When I married poor William you couldn't want a better village:
All the farms held by good families,
Todds, Challands, Keys, Pinions, and Danes,
And everybody knew their proper station;
But now this upstart crew of labourers—
Hides, Smithson, and Woods—
Are pushing the old stock out,
Whilst Creaseys and Overtons swarm like locusts everywhere.

Charles Pinion would turn in his grave:
What a gentleman he was on horseback
With his thin face, long hands, hunting-stock, top-boots, and gentlemanly ways.
Laurie's ruined himself by wedding the pawnbroker;
He's found it a dear way of getting money,
And his days are spent in trying to hide her vulgar mother,
Who, having been a barmaid, is always drunk by tea-time.
Poor nephew!
He's made his bed and must lie on it.
Bessie is crazed with these new ideas:
The solid decent things are no longer in fashion;
We must copy Mrs Edgerley if you please,
With gimcrack furniture, late dinners, afternoon teas, and the like:
Not whilst I live!
When I'm gone there will be no one left to protest.
It's at the *head* that Flètton is decaying;
Lady Betty's just passed in a skirt that shows her knees;
No one's against her having a little diversion so long as its kept quiet and in the proper circle—
Noblesse oblige!
And I'm too old to be silly about these matters,
For a husband like hers would drive a codfish to wander;
But to carry on with that vile Colonial is beyond all.
I keep expecting brother Jackson to marry a servant,
His babies couldn't be worse neglected anyway—
And as for Violet—
! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! !
My Jack may be wild but he's sound at heart;
He's quick-tempered like poor William,
And knocked that Australian deserter down when he abused his uncle,

So I couldn't very well scold him when he came in
with a black eye and broken tooth.

185.—Nevil Dane

I'm not going to marry the little Smithson or Cousin Vi
or any other girl to please mother;
It's bad enough to stick here farming to satisfy Father
when I want to be in Paris painting.
How can I rave over Basic Slag or Marrowfat Peas or
Cross-bred Ewes or getting the best of Uncle
Tony when my heart is on canvas?
I may be weak on drawing, which will come with
practice, but I've an eye for colour
And several sketches of the Church have been much
admired,
Even though I can't quite manage the villagers,
Who have such marked faces that only etching would
do them.
My old master, the queer, cracked Winter, used to
laugh at me when I attended the Art Class at
Bly—
Yet does he sell?
It was all very well for him to say an artist will give up
everything to follow his work;
He'd nothing to give up.
Fletton's full of barbarians and I'd run away if I
dare;
But look at cousin Judah!
He bolted, and we've got in his place that ass Edgerley,
Whose wife is a pearl in a swine's mouth
And has none to appreciate her but me.
(Why does she pretend to laugh at me?)
I'm the only representative of the Arts in the parish,
For no one counts Mr Coote with his talk about a
great work,
Reminding you of what's his name in Besant and Rice

(The Golden Butterfly ?)
Who was found to be a blank when drawn.
Villages and Art are incompatible;
There is no understanding or tolerance of leisure in this money-grubbing hole.
I admire the poppies and charlock in the wheat, and the wild geranium,
Whilst Father curses and Jenkins turns pale at the sight.
These vulgar surroundings prevent the flow of inspiration,
Let Townsend say what he will about native soil,
He's not a creative artist,
He simply wastes his life reading.
I wouldn't mind so much if I could get the Manor House;
It's a real Baronial Hall with its courtyard and lovely terraces,
Inhabited by a labourer's son who runs pigs in the Peach Garden and chits potatoes in the Ball-Room,
Whilst I herd in a superior pigsty:
The Earl's mad to allow such desecration.
In grandfather's time the grounds were kept like another Cowsley,
And it would only be fitting for me to have it again:
I could bring myself to marry money for that.

186.—Obadiah Hodgson

The Lord giveth and taketh away:
But it's a heavy cross. . . .
Why didn't He choose me and not Rachael ?
My poor lass . . . without a minute's warning. . . .
She lies there—

And I'm left with George a cripple, and little Rachel sick;
Who will help me, down this fen ?
I must fetch sister Annie;
She's had troubles of her own and knows.
The Doctor's been good to the little one:
Yes—he's a good man
Though cut off from the Lord:
Oh, my poor lass!

187.—Lt. Geoffrey Kyme, R.F.C.

It's queer to be flying over Fletton;
I know every inch of the ground,
For what Fitz and I haven't walked or motored we've coursed and hunted;
But things look different up here.
You can see the lie of the land,
Hills, heath, fens, and marshes;
There's the Roan down to the Brent, the Brent down to the Gulland, and the Gulland to the Sea:
Father should be up here:
He spends his life over County Drainage and would see the whole show.
You can follow the Brent up past Bly where it parts from the Sow and winds amongst the Limestone to the old home.
There's Hordle Village!
Dad says it wants a bomb, and it would be easy.
I wonder why Fen roads are so straight;
They look as if they'd been ruled.
There's Washover where we used to skate,
And Ouseley stuck in the swamps;
You can pick out all the Houses:
Churt, Belton, Carrington, Caxton, High Morton, Cowsley, and Winch:
And there's the Aerodrome!

188.—Mrs Jabez Wells

Why ain't the Master back?
Down these old Fens there ain't no neighbours,
And when he's finished with his labours
He gallops off full crack.
Them what's in towns has never tried
To live alone all terrified;
They talk about churchyards at night
Or things with chains dressed up in white,
Why, bless my soul! I'd gladly sleep
In any place what made them creep,
'Coz always they've a friend about
To hear if they should give a shout;
They don't know what it is to fear,
But here—
What's that?
Only the cat!
And she's as black as Death's own self;
She squats all loathly on yon shelf
With one unwinking eye on me,
I wish the Devil—
No!
Not *he*!
I didn't mean to mention names
Nor interfere with others' games.
They say as cats is really witches,
Like Betty Williamson (unwed)
Who wears a pair of moleskin breeches
And never sleeps upon a bed.
She sits beside her open door
With one foot always off the floor,
Quietly knitting, one eye cast
To overlook you when you've passed;
And just the same yon nasty critter
Stares at me now that slow and bitter.

Oh, dear! I wish my man would come;
May ague twist and strike him dumb!
May fairies nip his liver out
And leave him ne'er a tongue to shout,
Forsaking me, all lonesome here,
With everything what's wrong and queer.
From out my window, where I sit,
I see the willows round yon pit—
Dark pit where Laban Holmes was found,
As some said, accidental drowned—
But I heard screeching, terrified,
About the time he must have died.
Having no bottom, so they say,
It's dreadful secrets there must stay
Until the Resurrection Day.

Oh! where the devil's Jabez gone?
I'll give him pub when he gets home.
The wind is moaning round that pit
As if *somebody* wished to flit:
There's things in there what stirs by night
And, if you see, your hair turns white:
Around its edge, the Mandrake grows
What's pulled at dead of night by *those*
Who little care, although it screams
To wake poor mortals from their dreams.
Our parson tells of Powers evil,
(But Providence can't beat the devil)
Where should they lay but in yon Pit,
What makes me squirl to think of it:
All gashly arms a-reaching out
To clamber up your water-spout
And claw you through—
Oh, Lor'!
Who's that?
'Tis something coming—
I hear it humming . . .

My dear good Jabe! Thank God it's him!
I was afraid of something grim—
I've been a-wanting you so long—
You lousy mawkin, stinking strong
Of beer and bacca. Off to bed—
I'll larn you, Jabez, who you've wed:
'Fore morn you'll wish as you was dead.

189.—Mrs Enoch Winterbourne

Enoch may go on as he likes, but I'm for Mr Bennington;
Mr Mogg is in the right when he says we want an educated man,
And not a ragamuffin like Bob Cutts
Who I slapped once, in petticoats, for throwing stones at our cat.
Brother Josiah agrees with me and so does Isaiah,
Only having a small-holding, he thinks he's a better chance of getting on if he shouts for Wardle.
No doubt that is so,
Though nobody asked Levi how he voted when he volunteered.
Sister Rachael reckons nobody should a-gone except they had land,
Which is the wrong way about
'Coz them that had anything stopped at home to look after it.
Rachael's been queer lately
And if she's not up on Sunday I must go down the Fen to see her:
As Maria Creasey says, relations should stick together.
If only Jos and Enoch were better friends I'd be thankful,
But Jos was always crotchety,
And since Betty Williamson put a spell on him

By reason of which he lost an eye
He's been nearly as bad as Father was.
Last week he nearly killed Club-Foot George;
Of course George *is* aggravating, and would be no loss.
Enoch has his faults as well;
He loses his temper and shakes his fist when anybody sings out of tune the least little bit:
As if it mattered.
If Hannah Cook thinks she's going to come back and play the harmonium,
Now that Liz Dodds has sold herself to the Vicar,
She's mistook;
I'd chop it up for kindling sooner.

190.—Hilton Wells

If I'd my time over I'd marry an orphan;
You can have too many relations in a village:
What with Oldfields, Jorkins, and Ambroses,
All to find fault but none to trade—
Neither for meat, milk, nor beer—
You're better without any.
My own brother Reuben deals with that squint-eyed chap who brings foreign meat from Bly on Saturdays;
Money should be spent where it's earned, I say!
If Rube went to Creasey or Cullen it wouldn't be so bad.
Tubby Ambrose comes here one night and goes to Harvey the other:
Reuben's wife says if Tubby knew all his girls were up to he'd be nearly as knowing as he looks.
Jabe's all right of course;
He never moves till closing time on account of his missis,

Different to Wallace Ruston who's in and out like a cockerel.
Sam, who isn't as silly as he's said to be, reckons Wallace's afraid the Devil will catch him:
It's more likely the Wesleyans will, same as they did Barley;
Though—mind you—we shall get Oliver back.
Cobbler George tells me Enderby's going to be sold up by the Bank,
And I must bid for his potato-plough and scuffler
So that if anything should happen to Dobney I'd be ready to step in.
Sam Waddy gave me a hint yesterday—
He's been wonderful friendly of late:
Bertha says his missis means to run him for the District Council,
But that's all baggerment:
I've a better chance myself.
I must slip round to Saddler Jordan's about the hose connection;
You'd think the Earl would give us a motor fire-engine,
Like the beauty that Lord Kyme's given High Morton:
When the Towers is burnt down, p'raps he will.

191.—Gwinny Mogg

He needn't have bothered about the Registry Office
Nor yet about the money he's sent to America,
I should have gone without either
Because I love him so;
When he comes down the lane I shake all over;
He is my mate and I shall never leave him—
I would work my fingers to the bone
Or lie down and let him trample on me.
These whey-faced girls don't know what love is,

But I shall hold him so that he will never look away:
How I worship him!
He stood with his foot on this tree last night,
And I must kiss the place.
I don't care about not seeing anybody else again;
He could take anybody, high or low,
But he only wants me,
And I only want my mate.

192.—Old George Jenkins

When I was young we went to mow, tying the sheaves with bands of straw, and gleaning what the reapers left. We cut the ears with our sharp knives, and roasted them at a fire of turf dug from the black fen; while all the winter we threshed out the corn in the farmer's barn. Pleasant it was to watch the flails rise and fall with hollow thump and the owls disturbed in the high roof. The rooks gathered round the elm, the wind whistled through the thatch and the snow covered all.

But now the binder with iron claw ties the sheaves in a cunning knot and horse-rakes scour the bare stubble. The thresher hums like a thousand hives; gone are the old flails; and not too soon shall I lie in the quiet churchyard. Under the yew-tree the grass is long and by the crookled porch I shall be at rest with my fathers. All must come there at last though they fly faster than the wild geese; for the corn ripens, the fox creeps to his hole, and the snow covers all.

WHO'S WHO AND GENERAL INDEX

ABBREVIATIONS

D. Dead. *M.* Married; *B.* Bachelor; *W.* Widow or Widower; *Sp.* Spinster
Cons. Conservative; *Lib.* Liberal; *Lab.* Labour.
Ch. Church of England; *Bap.* Baptist; *Wes.* Wesleyan; *P.M.* Primitive Methodist; *S.A.* Salvation Army; *R.C.* Roman Catholic.

AGENT, THE: *See* THE HON. EUSTACE KYME.
AMBROSE, EDWARD: Age 39; on active service; *M.* E. Bell; 38.
AMBROSE, LENA: Age 46; Postmaster's wife; *Née* Bones; *Bap.*; *Cons.*; 41, 88, 95, 97.
AMBROSE, LUCY: *See* MRS H. DRING.
AMBROSE, MEG: Age 17; Daughter of Newton; Telegraphist; 30, 33, 80, 95, 97, 106, 163, 178, 190.
AMBROSE, NEWTON (TUBBY): Age 49; Postmaster, draper, grocer, and general stores; *Bap.*; *Lib.*; *M.* Lena Bones, 15, 19, 41, 88, 106, 124, 175, 190.
AMBROSE, POLL: Age 13; Daughter of Newton; Postal messenger and schoolgirl; 80, 95, 97, 106, 178, 190.
AMBROSE, SUE: Age 9; Daughter of Newton; Schoolgirl; 80, 95, 97, 190.
AMBROSE FAMILY, THE: 190.
ATKIN, 'OLD' BUTLER: Age 66; Farm labourer at Hides; *M.* O. Holmes; 4, 94.
ATKIN, 'YOUNG' BUTLER: Age 22; invalided from war; *B.*; *P.M.*; *Lab.*; engaged to M. Harker; lives with old people; 4, 38, 53, 66, 70, 94, 159, 171.
ATKIN, HORACE: Age 44; Farm labourer at Danes; *M.* J. Stower; *P.M.*; *Lab.*; 172.
ATKIN, JULIA: *See* MRS POTTERTON.
ATKIN, LOUISA: Age 19; Horace's daughter; *Sp.*; *P.M.*; *Cons.*; 48, 167.
ATKIN FAMILY, THE: 118.

BARKS, GEORGE: Age 32; Pinion's groom; *B.*; *P.M.*; *Lib.*; 29, 44, 63, 82, 132.
BARKS, JOE: Age 34; Poacher and general dealer and off-licence holder; *P.M.*; *Lab.*; *M.* Kate Jackson; 28, 34, 45, 73, 132.
BARKS, TOM: Age 20; Horseman for W. Bowles; *B.*; *P.M.*; *Cons.*; engaged to Sophie Hodgson; lives 'in'; 132.
BARLEY, ALEXANDER: Age 44; Market gardener, poultry breeder, egg and fowl buyer; *Bap.*; *Lab.*; *M.* Kate Atkin; 68, 82, 93, 125, 126, 145, 171, 181.
BARLEY, MRS A.: Age 30; *Née* Atkin; *Bap.*; *Cons.*; 97 171.
BARLEY, OLIVER: Age 41; Pig dealer; *Wes.*; *Lib.*; *M.* Nan Pratt; 20, 106, 125, 155, 168, 190.
BARLEY, MRS O.: Age 39; *Née* Pratt; *Wes.*; *Cons.*; 20, 155.
BAVIN, NICHOL: Age 30; *M.* Mary Ruston; Cycle and petrol shop and ironmonger; *Bap.*; *Cons.*; 149, 159, 161, 162, 181.
BAVIN, MRS N: Age 27; Nichol's wife; *Née* M. Ruston; *Bap.*; *Cons.*; 149, 162.
BAVIN, TOM: Age 45; expert pieceworker; *B.*; No religion; *Lab.*; lives with Leah Williamson; 3, 36, 62, 71, 86, 111, 124, 149, 162, 171.
BAVIN, WILL: Age 22; Edgerley's chauffeur; *B.*; *P.M.*; *Lab.*; engaged to M. Jackson; 143, 162.
BEAN, BILLY: Age 51; Bricklayer; *M.*; *P.M.*; *Lib.*; 4, 6, 7, 53, 98, 135.
BEAN, MRS: *D.*; Billy's mother; 7.
BELL, GEORGY: *D.*; sang carols; 23, 45, 85.
BELLAMY, JEREMIAH: *D.*; Butcher; *M.* Ann Hodgson; 47, 125, 168, 169.
BELLAMY, MRS (ANN): Age 57; cleans Baptist Chapel; *W.*; *Bap.*; *Cons.*; *Née* Hodgson; 47, 125, 168, 186.
BELLAMY, MOSES: Age 44; Sweep and market gardener and town crier; *P.M.*; *Lab.*; Jeremiah's youngest brother; *M.* Gladys Stennett; 168, 175.
BELLAMY GLADYS (MRS M.): Age 42; Sweep's wife; *P.M.*; *Cons.*; *Née* Stennett; 168.
BENNINGTON, GUSTAVUS: Age 61; Liberal candidate for Fletton Parliamentary division: lives at Platts Hole; *M.*; *Wes.*; *Lib.*; Retired manufacturer; 6, 31, 38, 53, 55, 74, 76, 128, 152, 182, 189.
BENTON, MATTHEW: Age 59; Farmer, not on estate; *M.*; *Wes.*, *Lib.*; 18, 93, 170.
BENTON, POLLY (MRS M.): Age 50; *Née* Ruston; 170.

BERRY, CYRUS, M.I.C.E.: Age 42; the doctor's cousin; Consulting engineer; *Cons.*; Rationalist; 18, 56, 91, 106, 172, 181, 183.
BERRY, JOSEPHUS, DR, L.S.A., M.R.C.S.: Age 55; *W.*; nc religion or politics; 17, 18, 46, 51, 52, 59, 66, 82, 93, 101, 105, 106, 120, 136, 140, 142, 148, 158, 183, 186.
BERRY, HOSEA: *D.*; Dr Berry's uncle; was schoolmaster in Fletton when his son Cyrus was a lad; 91, 181.
BLIND JOHNNY (TAYLOR): *D.*; Town crier; 54, 85, 135.
BLINKHORN OF BLY, LORD: Landowner; Blinkhorn House, Bly; 74.
BLOW (WILLIAM), 'OLD': *D.*; Veterinary surgeon; was eaten by rats; 18, 51, 106, 148, 160, 169.
BONES, BILL: *D.*; Cunning Jim's father; 85.
BONES, CHRISTIAN: Age 40; on active service; *M.* T. Wattam of Holt-in-the-Marsh; 38.
BONES, JAMES EDWARD (CUNNING JIM): Age 50; Small farmer; *W.*; *Ch.*; *Lib.*; *M.* Winnie Sharples; 14, 16, 38, 41, 52, 95, 105, 131, 141, 142, 145, 147, 152.
BONES, MRS J. E.: *D.*; *Née* Sharples; 95, 147.
BONES, TILLY: Age 16; Scullery maid at The Towers; *Sp.* eldest daughter of J. E. Bones; 24, 124.
BORKMAN, JOSEF: Age 37; Belgian refugee; *R.C.*; No politics; lodges with Harkers; Clockmender; 49, 66, 114, 138, 149, 150, 164, 165.
BORKMAN, ELISE: Age 28; Josef's wife; *R.C.*; living in London; 49, 114, 122, 149, 164, 165.
BOWLES, CHARLES: *D.*; Father of William and Thomas; 62.
BOWLES, GRANDMOTHER: *D.*; Charles's wife; *Née* Henrietta Marshall; 97.
BOWLES, THOMAS: Age 41; Farmer; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Hepzibah Creasey; 58, 62, 77, 97, 102, 147, 151, 160, 166.
BOWLES, MRS T.: Age 47; Thomas's wife; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *Née* Key; First husband James Creasey; 58, 62, 75, 77, 97, 102, 147, 151, 160.
BOWLES, WILLIAM: Age 41; Farmer; *Bap.*; *Lib.*; *M.* Jemima Hodgson; 58, 62, 90, 97, 102, 132, 147, 151, 160, 166.
BOWLES, MRS W.: Age 33; William's wife; *Bap.*; *Lib.*; *Née* Hodgson; was cook at Dower House; 58, 62, 97, 102, 132, 147, 150, 151.
BOWLES FAMILY, THE: 62, 70, 113.
BROOMFIELD, EMMANUEL: *D.*; Small farmer in Fletton; noted for his amours; 20, 55, 66, 81.
BUGG, BOB: *D.*; Pawnbroker in Bolton; left a considerable fortune to his widow; 29.

BUGG, MRS POLLY: Age 53; Pawnbroker's widow; Mildred Pinion's mother; lives at the Pinion's; 29, 108, 144, 184.
BURROWS, CARTWRIGHT: Age 46; County Court bailiff; *M.*; No religion; *Lib.*; lives at Bly; 104, 106, 145, 172, 183.
BURROWS, ENOCH: *D.*; *M.* T. Cook; Cartwright's father; 104.
BURROWS, MRS ENOCH: *D.*; *Née* Thyrza Cook; 104.
BURROWS, ESAU: Age 74; returned from U.S.A.; *W.*; Christian Scientist; Democrat; *M.* Isabel Strawson; 24, 41, 54, 94, 95, 141, 159.
BURROWS, MRS ESAU: *D.*; *Née* Isabel Strawson; 54.
BURROWS, ESAU, 'OLD': *D.*; Esau's father; *M.* A. Watson and H. Sneath; 54.
BURROWS, ESAU, 'YOUNG': Age 30; on active service; *M.* O. Morton of Bly; 38.
BURROWS, LOTTIE: Age 34; Dressmaker; *Sp.*; *Wes.*; *Cons.*; 41, 95, 101, 141.
BURROWS, TOM: Age 24; Ploughman at Pinions; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Maria Barks; 95, 135, 153, 179.
BURROWS, MRS T. (MARIA): Age 22; *Née* Barks; 135.
BURROWS, OLD TOM: *D.*; *M.* H. Broomfield; 'Young' Tom's father; 85, 135.
BURROWS FAMILY, THE: 165, 183.
BURTONSHAW, EMMA: Age 32; Infant mistress in Council School; *Sp.*; *Ch.*; *Lib.*; 11, 14, 17, 52, 56, 64, 80, 141, 158.

CHALLANDS, JACKSON: Age 55; Large farmer; Parish Councillor; *W.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* C. Dane; 10, 16, 26, 38, 42, 53, 70, 77, 80, 92, 95, 96, 98, 100, 184.
CHALLANDS, MRS J.: *D.*; *Née* Dane; 80.
CHALLANDS, OLD JACKSON: *D.*; was a very rich farmer in Fletton; 53, 65, 96, 104.
CHALLANDS, VIOLET: Age 18; Jackson's eldest daughter; *Sp.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 15, 53, 75, 80, 87, 95, 100, 115, 156, 184, 185.
CHALLANDS FAMILY, THE: 184.
CLUB-FOOT GEORGE: *See* GEORGE PRATT.
COBBLER GEORGE: *See* GEORGE GOOSE.
COOK, ALBERT: Age 45; Farm labourer for S. Dane; *S.A.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Hannah Bones; 41, 109, 167.
COOK, ALBERT (JNR.): Age 13; Albert's son; at school; 130.
COOK, HANNAH (MRS A.): Age 43; Albert's wife; *S.A.*; *Lib.*; *Née* Bones; 39, 41, 42, 109, 130, 167, 189.

COOK, EPHRAIM: Age 74; Farm labourer; *W.*; *P.M.*; *Cons.*; *M.* M. Jorkins; Father to Albert and Laura; 41, 84, 109.
COOK, JENNIE: Age 11; Schoolgirl; Daughter of Albert; 11.
COOK, JOHN: Age 37; Farm labourer at Hides; *P.M.*; *Cons.*; *M.* M. Maplethorpe; 139, 167.
COOK, LAURA: Age 38; Albert's sister; *Sp.*; *S.A.*; *Lib.*; lives with father; 38, 39, 41, 42, 84, 109.
COOK, LIZZIE: Age 16; Albert's daughter; apprenticed to Miss Burrows at dressmaking; 95.
COOTE, MAURICE FITZHERBERT, THE HON.: Age 51; referred to by the villagers as 'Mr' Coote; present Earl's youngest brother; *B.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 30, 35, 42, 66, 72, 120, 126, 157, 185.
COOTE, WILFRED, CAPT., M.C.: Age 31; invalided out of army and now recruiting officer for Fletton and district; stationed at Bly; 38, 176.
COOTE FAMILY, THE: 1, 6, 24, 42, 66, 69, 70, 76, 79, 94, 115, 120, 129, 157, 183.
COULSON, ABIJAH: *D.*; Father of David; Labourer; 57.
COULSON, DAVID: Age 43; Pig-killer and market gardener; Off licence; *P.M.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Dora Jackson; 48, 57, 73, 126, 138.
COULSON, DORA (MRS D.): Age 37; *Née* Jackson; David's wife; *P.M.*; *Cons.*; 138.
COUNTESS, THE: Age 59; *Née* Hermione Antoinette Lavinia Fortescue; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 24, 74, 93, 120, 128, 136, 157, 158, 180.
CREASEY, ABEL: Age 30; Engineer; Maria's son; *M.* a stranger; left Fletton; 96.
CREASEY, OLD ABRAHAM: *D.*; built the Baptist Chapel; 47.
CREASEY, ADAM: Age 18; apprenticed to a baker at Bly; Maria's son; 96.
CREASEY, AMOS: Drowned in water-butt; Maria's son; 96.
CREASEY, ANNIE: *See* MRS E. HICKS.
CREASEY, BESS: Age 26; Barmaid; Maria's daughter; 96, 147, 148.
CREASEY, EMMANUEL: Age 44; Astronomer; *B.*; Spiritualist; Fabian Socialist; Maria's eldest son; 38, 42, 91, 96, 138, 147, 160, 163.
CREASEY, ENOCH; Age 16; Schoolboy; Maria's son; 96.
CREASEY, ISAAC: Age 68; Auctioneer, butcher, and cattle-dealer and small farmer; Parish Councillor; *Bap.*; *Lib.*; *M.* S. Burrows; 6, 42, 46, 47, 90, 96, 97, 113, 148, 150, 160, 169, 181, 190.
CREASEY, MRS I.: Age 46; *Née* Sarah Burrows; 97.

CREASEY, JABEZ: *D.*; Maria's husband (and cousin); 96.
CREASEY, JACOB, 'OLD': *D.*; Maria's brother-in-law; *M.* Emily Bones; 96, 147, 148.
CREASEY, MRS J.: *D.*; Jacob's wife; *Née* Emily Bones; 96.
CREASEY, JACOB, 'LITTLE': Killed in action; Maria's son; 38, 96.
CREASEY, JAMES: *D.*: Maria's brother-in-law; *M.* Hepzibah Key and two other women; 62, 96.
CREASEY, JANE: Age 35; Cook in Bly; *Sp.*; *Bap.*; no politics; Maria's daughter; 96, 138, 147, 148.
CREASEY, JOB: Age 42; Small holder under County Council; *Lib.*; *Wes.*; *M.* Susan Dring; Maria s son; 24, 96, 107.
CREASEY, MRS JOB: Job's wife; *Née* S. Dring; 96.
CREASEY, JOEL: Drowned in water-butt; Maria's son; 96.
CREASEY, MARIA (MRS JABEZ): Age 62; Grocer's, draper's, and confectioner's shop; *W.*; *Bap.*; *Cons.*; *M.* her cousin Jabez; 38, 46, 56, 91, 96, 113, 137, 138, 150, 189.
CREASEY, MARY: Age 36; Nurse; Maria's daughter; *Sp*; 96.
CREASEY, NOAH, M.P.S.: Age 43; Chemist and druggist; Maria's second son; no religion or politics; *M.* Lorna Ravell; 49, 68, 82, 96, 105, 138, 148, 158.
CREASEY, MRS N.: Age 29; *Née* Lorna Ravell; a Cornish girl; whereabouts unknown; 49, 96.
CREASEY, SUSANNAH: Age 21; Maria's daughter; Munition worker at Bly; 96, 113, 138.
CREASEY, WALTER: Age 38; Civil Service; Maria's son; *M.* a stranger; 96.
CREASEY, WILL: Age 19; Maria's son; lives at home; an invalid; *B.*; 96.
CREASEY FAMILY, THE: 42, 96, 102, 147, 148, 160, 184.
CULLEN, ALFRED: Age 53; Butcher, cattle-dealer, and licensed slaughterer; *Wes.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Mercy Tharp; 42, 103, 169, 190.
CULLEN, MERCY (MRS A.): Age 46; Alfred's wife; *Wes.*; *Cons.*; *Née* Tharp; 103, 169.
CULLEN, GUY: Committed suicide; Alfred's son; 42, 45, 49, 85, 103, 169.
CULLEN, JOE: Age 10; Guy's brother; at school; 130, 169.
CUNNING JIM: *See* J. E. BONES.
CUTTS (ANN) ANGELICA: Age 52; Charwoman; *Sp.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 81, 94, 105, 152, 182.
CUTTS, BOB: Age 54; Tailor; Parliamentary Labour candidate for Fletton Division; lives at Hordle; *P.M.*; *Lab.*; Ann's brother; *M.* J. Jenkins; 6, 16, 31, 55, 71, 76, 81, 106, 116, 118, 126, 128, 152, 163, 167, 182, 189.

CUTTS, JOE: Age 20; Second clerk in Estate Office and correspondent to *Bly Chronicle*; *B.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; Ann's son; Father uncertain; 30, 38, 46, 81, 163.
CUTTS, 'SILLY' SAM: Age 51; Bob's brother; weak in the head; works at the Ship Inn and sleeps in hayloft; *B.*; 24, 59, 81, 103, 137, 179, 190.

DANE, ANNABEL: Age 22; Anthony Dane's daughter; ran away to London; 119.
DANE, ANTHONY: Age 57; Stockbreeder and large farmer; *W.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Pansy Hides; 9, 15, 32, 41, 42, 74, 87, 117, 119, 121, 123, 146, 148, 185.
DANE, MRS ANTHONY: *D.*; *Née* Hides; 117.
DANE, JUDAH: Age 24; Anthony's son; bolted from home; *M.* Irish governess; 117, 119, 185.
DANE, MRS J.: *D.*; *Née* Kathleen Minta; *M.* Judah Dane; 117.
DANE, NEVIL: Age 25; Farmer; *B.*; Solomon's son; 15, 29, 37, 77, 117, 144, 173, 177, 180, 185.
DANE, SOLOMON, J.P., C.C.: Age 59; Large farmer; District Councillor; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* K. Pinion; 6, 9, 16, 32, 42, 74, 76, 117, 119, 121, 144, 185.
DANE, MRS S.: Age 56; *Née* Pinion; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 29, 144, 185.
DANE FAMILY, THE: 184.
DANIELS, JOSEPH: Age 57; Police inspector; *M.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 17, 42, 46, 54, 66, 70, 81, 84, 97, 126, 158, 159, 175, 177.
DAWSON, ALF: Age 36; 'Shep's' son; Farm labourer at Hides; *M.* Jada Atkin; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 171.
DAWSON, JADA (MRS A.): Age 36; *Née* Atkin; 171.
DAWSON, 'SHEP': Age 68; Shepherd at Hides; *M.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 78, 142.
DOBNEY, ELIZA: Age 26; Fred's daughter; *Sp.*; *Bap.*; *Cons.*; 60, 61, 75, 101, 110, 127, 150, 156, 174.
DOBNEY, FREDERICK: Age 64; Draper, haberdasher, and outfitter; Parish Councillor; *Bap.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Susan Key; 32, 60, 61, 69, 90, 95, 97, 99, 101, 102, 110, 123, 127, 145, 150, 161, 163, 172, 174, 177, 190.
DOBNEY, MRS F. (SUSAN): Age 63; *Née* Key; *Bap.*; *Cons.*; 49, 60, 69, 75, 97, 101, 102, 110, 150, 177.
DOBNEY, HERBERT: Age 32; Clerk in Estate Office; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Ellen Waddy; 12, 25, 38, 60, 61, 68, 89, 93, 110, 111, 123, 163, 164, 172, 174.
DOBNEY, ELLEN (MRS H.): Age 30; *Née* Waddy; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 25, 38, 60, 61, 89, 110, 111, 123, 150, 151, 163, 164, 172, 174, 182

DOBNEY, 'GRANDFATHER,' JOHN HERBERT: *D.*; Frederick's father; established the drapery business; *M.* Keziah Lowe and Mary Underwood; 60.
DOBNEY, MAUD: *See* MRS J. OVERTON.
DOBNEY FAMILY, THE: 42, 60, 61, 97, 102, 113, 127, 150, 160.
DODDS, ROBERT: Age 47; Farm labourer; Nathaniel's son; *M.* Eliza Stower; *P.M.*; *Lab.*; 65, 80, 100, 118, 167, 172.
DODDS, ELIZA: Age 45; Robert Dodd's wife; *Née* Stower; Jimmy's mother; *P.M.*; *Lab.*; 41, 65, 100, 118, 150, 167, 182, 189.
DODDS, JIMMY: Age 17; Handy lad at Vicarage; Nathaniel's grandson; 65, 100, 159, 167.
DODDS, NATHANIEL: Age 88; Market gardener; *W.*; *P.M.*; *Lab.*; *M.* Mary Ann Jackson; 26, 65, 100, 118, 167.
DORRIEN, 'GRANDMOTHER': *See* 'GRANDMOTHER' THARP.
DRING, HAMILTON: Age 49; Schoolmaster; *Ch.*; *Lib.*; *M.* Lucy Ambrose; 42, 111, 130, 151, 172, 178.
DRING, MRS H.: Age 44; *Née* Ambrose (Lucy); *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 88, 130, 151, 181.

EARL, THE FIRST: Aubrey Llewellyn Coote; Founder of the family in A.D. 1664; 1.
EARL, THE LATE (THE ELEVENTH): 27, 42, 46, 65, 69, 81.
EARL, THE (TWELFTH), (GEOFFREY LLEWELLYN AUBREY WARRINGTON COOTE): Age 63; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Hermione Antoinette Lavinia Fortescue; 1, 2, 4, 7, 12, 16, 17, 24, 26, 27, 30, 32, 35, 45, 47, 53, 54, 65, 71, 74, 91, 104, 116, 120, 121, 125, 129, 134, 135, 146, 157, 170, 185, 190.
EDGERLEY, ALGERNON: Age 27; Farmer; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; from London; only son of rich father; *M.* Lettice Corby; 5, 29, 37, 52, 69, 89, 143, 162, 171, 177, 180, 181, 185.
EDGERLEY, MRS A.: Age 29; *Née* Corby; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; only daughter of rich mother; 15, 29, 46, 75, 143, 162, 180, 184, 185.
EDGERLEY, CLARKSON: *D.*; Algernon's father; 52.
EDGERLEY FAMILY, THE: 29, 75.
ELSOM, LEONARD: Corn merchant in Bly; father lived in Fletton; *M.* Rhoda Ruston; 99.
ELVIN, ABINGER: *D.*; Joseph's father; Small farmer in Fletton; 107.
ELVIN, JOSEPH: Age 68; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Dora Rowett; Small farmer; 107, 133, 142, 147, 166.
ELVIN, DORA (MRS J.): Age 50; *Née* Rowett; 133, 166.

ENDERBY, MORTON : Age 64; Ironmonger and general store, plumber and second-hand dealer, repairer of machines and implements; *M.* Dinah Smithson; *P.M.*; *Lib.*; 32, 42, 48, 74, 84, 149, 162, 175, 181, 183, 190.
ENDERBY, DINAH (MRS M.) : Age 65; *Née* Smithson; 181.
ENDERBY FAMILY, THE : 183.

FENNINGTON, KENNETH : Hay merchant in Bly; grandfather lived in Fletton; 99.
FERRETT 'LAWYER,' (PHINEAS) : Age 58; *M.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; has house in Fletton but office in Bly; 1, 2, 6, 7, 13, 17, 33, 54, 79, 90, 101, 106, 116, 120, 123, 128, 137, 159, 173, 178.
FERRETT, MONTAGUE : Age 14; Son of Phineas; At Bly Grammar School; 13, 100, 106, 159, 178.
'FITZ,' LORD (THE HON. FITZGERALD COOTE) : Age 19; Earl's second son; *B.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; home on leave; 22, 24, 66, 80, 93, 115, 120, 124, 152, 157, 159, 180, 187.
FLETCHER, LUKE : Age 55; Tailor and outfitter; *Wes.*; *Lib.*; *M.* Norah Ruston; Parish Councillor; 31, 42, 55, 73, 76, 118, 128, 175.
FLETCHER FAMILY, THE : 75.
FORTESCUE, THE HON. CECIL : Age 51; Countess's brother; *B.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 120.
FORTESCUE FAMILY, THE : 157.
FULLERTON, CURTIS : Age 46; Farmer not on the estate; *Bap.*; *Lib.*; farm outside parish, but Fletton his headquarters; *M.* May Ambrose; 46, 79, 82, 90, 93, 170.
FULLERTON, MRS C. : Age 46; *Née* Ambrose; 97.
FULLERTON, JOE : Son of Curtis; works for father; 82.
FULTON, J. : Professional golfer at Bly; 93.

GILLIAT, JOE : Bankrupt market gardener; left Fletton; 45.
GLOVER, TOM : Age 41; District road surveyor; Lives in Bly; Susannah Creasey's married lover; 106, 113, 138, 178.
GOOSE, GEORGE 'COBBLER' : Age 56; Boot shop; *Ch.*; *Lib.*; *M.* Harriet Stower; 42, 69, 126, 129, 172, 175, 190.
GOOSE, JOHN JOSEPH : Age 88; Retired barge-owner; *M.* T. Bembridge of Hordle; no religion; *Cons.*; Cobbler George's father; 9, 51, 69, 125, 129.
GOOSE, SAUL : Age 28; Son of Trotter Goose; *M.* J. Jorkins; at the war; 38.
GOOSE, TROTTER : *D.*; Labourer; Cobbler George's brother; 38.

GOOSE, MRS TROTTER: Age 51; *Née* Sarah Harker; Widow of Trotter Goose; *P.M.*; *Cons.*; Saul's mother; 38.
GORMAN & SONS, LTD.: Drapers at Bly; 95.
GUNN, ELI: Age 61; Late clerk to agent; *M.* Nance Overton; *Lib.*; *Ch.*; retired to a farm at Hordle; 38, 107, 163.

HANBURY, JAMES: Age 57; Bank manager; *M.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 32, 42, 66, 112, 175, 181.
HARBORD, CHRISTOPHER: Landowner at Caxby; *Lib.*; 157.
HARKER, JIM: Age 27; Minnie's brother; on active service; 38, 165.
HARKER, MINNIE: Age 30; Girls' mistress at Council School; *Sp.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; engaged to Butler Atkin; lives with mother; 4, 11, 14, 17, 24, 49, 56, 66, 138, 159, 165.
HARKER, WIDOW (BESS): Age 52; Charwoman; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *Née* Burrows; 51, 56, 165, 175.
HARROD, PETER: Age 28; *M.* K. Pearson of Hordle; Constable under Inspector Daniels; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 28, 66, 154.
HARROD, WALKER: Killed in action; was farm labourer at D. Moggs's; *M.* Lucy Jenkins; 10, 24, 37, 38.
HARROD, MRS W.: Age 25; War widow; *Wes.*; *Cons.*; granddaughter of George Jenkins; 10, 37, 140.
HARVEY, JACOB: Age 77; Landlord of Golden Cross and market gardener; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; first wife W. Strawson; second wife Tilly Overton; 18, 52, 54, 91, 95, 137, 179, 183, 190.
HARVEY, MRS J. (No. 1): *D.*; *Née* Strawson; 18.
HARVEY, MRS J. (No. 2): Age 34; *Née* Overton; 18, 137.
HARVEY, OLD MR: *D.*; had Golden Cross before Jacob; 18.
HEMSLEY, HARRY: Age 20; Farmer's son; *B.*; *Wes.*; *Cons.*; son of Widow Hemsley; engaged to Bessie Key; 33, 59, 61, 64, 75, 89, 160.
HEMSLEY, JAMES: *D.*; *M.* Lydia Lowe; Farmer on Estate; 59, 64.
HEMSLEY, WIDOW: Age 58; Farmer; *Wes.*; *Lib.*; late husband James Hemsley; *Née* Lowe; 33, 59, 64, 75, 112.
HEMSLEY FAMILY, THE: 74, 75.
HERRIES, LORD DAVID: Herries Hall, Caxton-in-the-Wold; a recently ennobled politician; 134.
HICKS, ENDERBY, M.R.C.V.S.: Age 36; Veterinary surgeon; *Bap.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Annie Creasey; 96, 105, 148, 160, 178.
HICKS, ANNIE (MRS E.): Age 24; *Née* Creasey; *Bap.*; *Cons.*; 75, 96, 148, 160, 174.
HICKS FAMILY, THE: 160.

HIDES, BANNISTER: Age 49; Large farmer; *W.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Bertha Hemsley; 5, 9, 16, 42, 53, 74, 78, 87, 93, 142, 163, 170, 181, 184, 185.
HIDES, MRS B.: *D.*; *Née* Hemsley; 74.
HIDES, BANNISTER (JNR.): Age 18; lives with father; *B.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 74, 80, 87, 177.
HIDES, ROBERT: *D.*; Bannister's father; Farm labourer; 185.
HIDES FAMILY, THE: 53, 74.
HODGSON, ALBERT: Age 28; John's son; Farming at Hordle; 132.
HODGSON, GEORGE (JNR.): Age 16; Obadiah's son; a cripple; 186.
HODGSON, JOHN: Age 60; Farm foreman at Pinion's; *Wes.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Mabel Harrod; 5, 132, 135, 153.
HODGSON, OBADIAH: Age 58; Road-mender and mole-catcher; *W.*; *P.M.*; *Cons.*; John's brother; *M.* Rachael Swinton; 78, 106, 132, 158, 186.
HODGSON, MRS O. (RACHAEL): *D.*; *Née* Swinton; 158, 186, 189.
HODGSON, RACHAEL (JNR.): Age 7; Obadiah's daughter; 186.
HODGSON, SOPHIE: Age 22; John's daughter; engaged to Tom Barks; 132.
HODGSON, STEPHEN: Age 30; on active service; *M.* A. Bowser of South Winch; 38.
HODGSON FAMILY, THE: 151.
HOLMES, ARTHUR: Age 35; Gardener at Towers; *M.* J. Dodds; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 24, 182.
HOLMES, LABAN: *D.*; Moller's father; *M.* T. Barks; drowned in Wells's Pit; 188.
HOLMES, MOLLER: Age 37; Labourer at Fullerton's; *P.M.*; *Lab.*; *M.* Harriet Overton; Local secretary of the Agricultural Workers' Union; invalided from war; 16, 24, 38, 53, 54, 66, 71, 118, 135, 171, 182.
HOLMES, HARRIET (MRS M.): Age 35; *Née* Overton; 81, 118, 182.
HOLMES, REUBEN: Age 31; Gardener at Towers; *M.* W. Jorkins; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 24, 182.
HOLMES, TOM: Age 12; Moller's eldest boy; works for Pinion; 153.
HURCOMB-KNATT, DR A.: Captain in R.A.M.C. (New Zealand Expeditionary Force); *M.* Adela Lorne; 105, 136.
HURCOMB-KNATT, ADELA: Age 46; New Zealand doctor's wife; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; Vicar's only sister; 38, 75, 100, 105, 120, 129, 136, 175.

JACKSON, ABEL: *D.*; Walter's father; 140.
JACKSON, 'GRANDMOTHER' (MRS J.): Age 99; *Née* Pratt; *W.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; second oldest inhabitant; lives with grandson Walter; Peg-Leg's and Walter's grandmother; 18, 101, 140, 175.
JACKSON, MILLY: Age 23; Walter's youngest sister; in service at The Towers; engaged to Will Bavin; 24, 162.
JACKSON, NAOMI: *See* MRS MALACHI SMITHSON.
JACKSON, 'PEG-LEG': Age 40; Handy man at Golden Cross; *B.*; no religion or politics; Adam's son; 24, 54, 82, 126, 137, 140, 159, 161, 175.
JACKSON, WALTER: Age 38; Head gamekeeper on Estate; *B.*; *Ch.*; *Lib.*; Peg-Leg's cousin; 28, 82, 124, 140.
JACKSON FAMILY, THE: 156.
JAMESON, 'CAPTAIN' NORMAN: Age 43; Salvation Army officer; *M.*; no politics; lodges with Albert Cook; 20, 39, 41, 42, 51, 66, 84, 108, 109, 130, 145, 146, 149, 156, 158, 173.
JAMESON, MRS N.: Norman's wife; whereabouts unknown; 41, 109.
JAMESON, JOHN: Norman's brother; 109.
JAMESON, OLD MRS: Died in workhouse; Norman's mother; 156.
JENKINS, BENJAMIN: Age 54; Foreman to Nevil Dane; Old George's son; *B.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 185.
JENKINS, 'OLD' GEORGE: Age 100; oldest inhabitant; *M.* A. Atkin; *W.*; no religion or politics; lives with granddaughter, Mrs Walker Harrod; 37, 94, 101, 140, 183, 192.
JORDAN (SETH), SADDLER: Age 76; Saddler; off licence holder; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* a Hordle girl; 2, 46, 69, 73, 125, 190.
JORKINS, EZRA: Age 28; Hiram's son; *B.*; *Wes.*; *Lab.*; works for father; 121.
JORKINS, HIRAM: Age 50; Small-holder under County Council; *Wes.*; *Lab.*; *M.* Harriet Maplethorpe; 71, 84, 121, 126.
JORKINS FAMILY, THE: 190.

KEY, ANDREW, 'OLD': *D.*; Farmer on Estate; *M.* E. Ward (of Pantacks); grandfather to Bessie and Jack; 9
KEY, BESSIE: Age 29; William's daughter; *Sp.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; engaged to Harry Hemsley; 59, 61, 64, 75, 110, 160, 184.
KEY, JACK: Age 38; Horse, cattle, and general dealer, and small farmer; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Jennie Ruston; 36, 59, 65, 89, 164, 184.

KEY, WILLIAM: *D.*; Old Andrew's son; Farmer on Estate; *M.* S. Challands; father to Bessie and Jack; 184.
KEY, MRS WILLIAM: Age 60; *W.*; *Née* Challands; 75, 184.
KEY FAMILY, THE: 59, 64, 150, 184.
KING, ADA: Age 15; Maid at Towers; 24.
KING, JERRY: Age 18; Valet to Mr Coote; *B.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 24, 30, 126.
KING, MARTHA: Age 52; had son (Adolphus Swift) by Earl, and was paid to emigrate to America; 27, 32, 51.
KING, MARY: Age 17; Housemaid at the Pinion's; *Sp.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 29, 44, 51, 63, 108, 165, 175.
KING, SUSAN (MRS M.): Age 55; *Née* Burrows; *W.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; Handy woman; 30, 51, 63, 108, 126, 158, 165, 171, 175, 177.
KYME, THE HON. EUSTACE: Age 35; Earl's nephew; Agent to Estate; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Lady Betty Wordsworth; 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 29, 42, 53, 54, 65, 66, 68, 70, 71, 72, 74, 79, 81, 87, 93, 99, 120, 123, 153, 157, 177, 184.
KYME, LADY BETTY: Age 33; The Agent's wife; *Née* Wordsworth; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 8, 12, 15, 30, 38, 45, 74, 93, 123, 148, 157, 164, 180, 184.
KYME, LT. THE HON. GEOFFREY, R.F.C.: Age 23; Second son of Lord Kyme of Kyme Castle; *B.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; Eustace's brother; 104, 115, 187.
KYME, LORD: Of Kyme Castle; Landowner; *M.* the Earl's sister; 187, 190.

LONGTHORNE, ANDREW: Age 53; London milliner; *M.* General Baptist; *Lib.*; 33, 52, 143, 149, 150, 158, 163, 170.
LONGTHORNE, EMILY: Andrew's wife; has money; 52, 158.
LONGTHORNE, GEORGINA: Age 29; Trained nurse; *Sp.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; Andrew's niece; 17, 52, 81, 101, 105, 140, 158.
LORNE, OSMOND RODERICK, THE REV., M.A.: *See* VICAR.
LORNE, MRS OSMOND: Age 47; Vicar's wife; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *Née* Janet Martin; 2, 3, 11, 17, 47, 75, 81, 86, 120, 129, 133, 136, 151, 158, 171, 175, 181, 182.
LOWE, AMELIA: Age 96; F. Dobney's half-sister; *Sp.*; *Bap.*; *Cons.*; oldest woman but one in Fletton; 94, 95, 101, 140, 141.
LOWE, JAMES: *D.*; Father to Amelia; *M.* Keziah Thomson, who afterwards married J. H. Dobney; 101.
LOWE, JEREMIAH: Age 71; Coal-dealer (practically retired); *W.*; *Wes.*; *Cons.*; antiquarian; *M.* Doris Todd; 42, 94, 101, 126, 130, 159, 172, 182.
LOWE, FAMILY, THE: 94.

MAKINS, DAVE: Age 27; on active service; *M.* B. Sharples; *P.M*; *Lab.*; 38.
MAKINS, FRED: Age 34; Off licence holder and market gardener; *M.* Carrie Stower; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 73, 172.
MAKINS, HENRY: *D.*; Joe's father; 9.
MAKINS, JEREMIAH: (Rat Jerry) *D.*; was landlord of "Mill Inn."; Henry's father.
MAKINS, JOE: Age 32; Army pensioner; fried fish and ice-cream vendor; no politics or religion; *M.* Sarah King; 10, 37, 38, 53, 54, 66, 92, 129, 137, 145, 159.
MAKINS, MRS J. (SARAH): Age 30; *Née* King; *M.*; *Ch.*; *Lib.*; niece to Susan King; 10, 37, 92.
MAPLETHORPE, AMY: Age 16; Housemaid at Vicarage; Snip's daughter; 3, 100.
MAPLETHORPE, JOE (CURLY): *D.*; Snip's father; Tailor; *M.* C. Lammyman (of Hordle); 126.
MAPLETHORPE, 'SNIP': Age 47; Tailor; *Wes.*; *Lib.*; *M.* Olive Munks; 126, 129, 152.
MAPLETHORPE, ZACHARIAH: *D.*; Tailor in Bly; born in Fletton; Snip's uncle; *M.* Annie Holmes; 126, 152.
MARSHFELLOWTON, LORD: Landowner (Marsh House); estate adjoins Fletton, on the south; 120, 170.
MARTIN, OSMOND: Mrs Lorne's brother; 86.
MARTIN, RONALD, LT.: Age 22; Mrs Lorne's cousin; *B.*; on leave from the war; 175.
MOGG, ANGELINA: Age 26; Davis's eldest daughter; *Sp.*; *P.M.*; *Lib.*; 15, 45, 48, 117, 146.
MOGG, ARTHUR: Age 20; Davis's only son; *B.*; *P.M.*; *Lib.*; 15, 30, 45, 77, 80, 87, 146, 149, 173, 177.
MOGG, DAVIS: Age 54; Farmer; *M.*; *P.M.*; *Lib.*; owner of Grange Farm; Parish Councillor; 1, 6, 7, 9, 22, 37, 38, 42, 45, 51, 83, 93, 94, 115, 126, 146, 167, 189.
MOGG, MRS D.: Age 51; Welsh; *M.*; *P.M.*; *Lib.*; 146.
MOGG, GRANDFATHER: *D.*; Farmer at Llantyfechan; 1, 6, 94.
MOGG, GWINNY: Age 19; Davis's daughter; *Sp.*; *P.M.*; *Lib.*; 15, 22, 27, 45, 48, 51, 115, 146, 152, 191.
MOGG, FAMILY, THE: 15, 51, 61, 94.
MORGAN, JULIUS: Proprietor of most of the travelling shows attending Fletton Feast; no religion or politics; many wives; 23, 30, 38, 163, 183.
MULLEN, FRANCIS, & SONS LTD.: Potato merchants and great farmers of Bly and Friston; farming great stretch of Fen land around Washover Ferry; 38, 74, 99, 112.
MUNKS, JESSE: Age 38; Pedlar and agent for the Prudential Insurance Coy.; *B.*; *P.M.*; *Lab.*; Bob Cutts's agent for

Fletton; lodges with the Atkins; 16, 71, 116, 118, 135, 152, 161, 182.

OLDFIELD, HUCKLEBURY: Age 50; Sexton and blacksmith, and clerk to Parish Council; *Ch.*; *Lib.*; *M.* Amelia Rowett; 104, 121, 133.
OLDFIELD, AMELIA (MRS H.): Age 48; *Née* Rowett; *Ch.*; *Lib.*; 25, 104, 111, 133, 161, 164.
OLDFIELD, MOLL: *See* MRS B. OVERTON.
OLDFIELD, RUFUS: Age 47; Small-holder under County Council; *Lib.*; *Wes.*; *B.*; 14, 34, 71.
OLDFIELD FAMILY, THE: 104, 111, 190.
OVERTON, BILL: Age 36; Threshing machine minder; *Wes.*; no politics; *M.* Moll Oldfield; 25, 71, 104, 111, 123, 133, 163, 164, 172, 182.
OVERTON, MOLL (MRS B.): Age 26; *Née* Oldfield; *Wes.*; *Cons.*; 25, 104, 111, 133, 161, 164.
OVERTON, FRED: Age 38; Skilled labourer; *Wes.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Emmie Makins; 71, 74, 94.
OVERTON, MRS F. (EMMIE): Age 31; *Née* Makins; *Wes.*; *Cons.*; 71.
OVERTON, JOHN: Age 32; Small farmer; *Bap.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Maud Dobney; 25, 60, 61, 69, 71, 74, 123, 145, 174, 177, 182.
OVERTON, MRS J.: Age 28; *Née* Dobney; *Bap.*; *Cons.*; 60, 61, 75, 97, 174, 182.
OVERTON, 'OLD' JOHN: *D.*; Father of Bill, Fred, John, etc.; Labourer and small holder; 61.
OVERTON, SARAH: *See* MRS N. STENNETT.
OVERTON, TILLY: *See* MRS JACOB HARVEY.
OVERTON, WIDOW: Age 74; Old John's wife; *Née* Wade; 61.
OVERTON, FAMILY, THE: 61, 182, 184.

PETCHELL, HARE: committed suicide; Farmer in Fletton; 18, 73.
PINION, CHARLES: *D.*; was the 'first' farmer in Fletton in his day; lived in the Manor House; *M.* O. Strawson; 78, 144, 184, 185.
PINION, 'GENTLEMAN' (LAURENCE): Age 30; Large farmer; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Mildred Bugg; 5, 9, 29, 37, 44, 58, 63, 74, 108, 135, 143, 144, 153, 165, 177, 180, 184.
PINION, MRS L. (MILDRED): Age 34; *Née* Bugg; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; Bolton pawnbroker's only child; 9, 29, 44, 51, 58, 63, 108, 143, 144, 153, 180, 184.
PINION, RONALD: *D.*; Laurie's father; was farmer on Estate; 5.

PINION FAMILY, THE : 5, 144, 184.
POTTERTON, ABRAHAM : *D.*; Eli's father; was churchwarden; 54.
POTTERTON, ELI : Age 55; Milk dealer, baker, and churchwarden; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Julia Atkin ; 104, 129, 171.
POTTERTON, MRS E. : Age 47; *Née* Atkin; 171.
PRATT, AMOS : Age 35; *M.* Nancy Dodds; Club-Foot George's brother; Pig-dealer; *P.M.*; *Lab.*; 167, 176.
PRATT, NANCY (MRS A.) : Age 35; *Née* Dodds; *M.* Amos Pratt; 167.
PRATT, BOB : *D.*; was a farm labourer; 9, 85.
PRATT, ELISHA : killed in action; Bob's son; *M.* S. Palmer (of Hordle); 24, 38.
PRATT, GEORGE (CLUB-FOOT GEORGE) : Age 34; Labourer for J. E. Bones; *B.*; no religion or politics; 131, 152, 189.
PRATT, WILL : Age 32; Under-gardener at Dower House; *M.* S. Waddy; no religion; *Lab.*; 24.

RAWSON, PROFESSOR : Professor at Barkston Agricultural College; 143.
ROGERS, AGGIE : died in lunatic asylum where she went after shock of parents' death; 170.
ROGERS, FARMER : committed suicide; farmed Deadman's Ground; 170.
ROGERS, MRS : husband cut her throat before committing suicide; 170.
ROOK, SMITH : Age 56; County Council small-holder and off licence holder; *M.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 71, 73, 176.
ROOK, ROBIN : Age 22; works for father; 176.
ROWETT, ANNIE : Age 31; Thompson's daughter; ran away from home; *Sp.*; no religion; Socialist; 33, 122.
ROWETT, ETHEL : Age 29; Housekeeper for father; *Sp.*; *Wes.*; no politics; 122.
ROWETT, SARAH : *See* MRS T. STOWER.
ROWETT, THOMPSON : Age 58; Farmer, horse, cattle and corn dealer; chairman of Parish Council; *M.* Florence Winterbourne; *W.*; *Wes.*; *Lib.*; 32, 33, 36, 38, 42, 50, 53, 59, 64, 67, 80, 81, 89, 107, 112, 115, 122, 133, 143, 159, 161, 163, 170, 175, 179.
ROWETT, MRS T. : *D.*; *Née* Winterbourne; 64, 67, 161.
ROWETT, FAMILY, THE : 36, 133, 166.
RUSTON, JAPHET : Age 68; Butcher; landlord of Coach and Horses; *M.* Ann Jorkins; *W.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 18, 69, 73, 83, 106, 161, 175, 178.
RUSTON, WALLACE : Age 56; *M.* Rhoda Rowett; Draper,

general store-keeper; *Bap.*; *Cons.*; 48, 73, 106, 126, 149, 161, 190.
RUSTON, MRS W.: Age 56; *Née* Rowett; *Bap.*; *Cons.*; 20, 73, 149, 161.

SCOTT, MAJOR: Golfer friend of the Hon. Eustace Kyme; 93.
SHARP, JAMES: Straw and corn merchant in Bly; father lived in Fletton; 99, 112.
SHARPLES, ADAM: Age 53; Miller and baker and market gardener; secretary to Oddfellows; *Wes.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Ann Toulson; 84, 147, 166.
SHARPLES, MRS A.: Age 48; *Née* Toulson; *Wes.*; *Cons.*; 147.
SHARPLES, JEFF: Age 55; Carrier; off licence; *P.M.*; no politics; *M.* Eliza Cook; 73, 84, 106, 109, 147, 166.
SHARPLES, MRS JEFF: Age 40; *Née* Eliza Cook; 41, 84, 109.
SHARPLES, WINNIE: *See* MRS J. E. BONES.
SILLY SAM: *See* S. CUTTS.
SKINNER, ALBERT: Age 35; Daniel's son; farming in Australia; 98.
SKINNER, BURTON: *D.*; Daniel's brother; father to Moses; 23.
SKINNER, DANIEL: Age 73; Carpenter, wheelwright, and undertaker; *Bap.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Esther Holmes; 32, 96, 98, 138, 166.
SKINNER, 'LITTLE' DANIEL: Age 32; Daniel's son; farming in Australia; 98.
SKINNER, JOE: Age 38; Daniel's son; farming in Australia; 98.
SKINNER, JOYCE: Age 40; keeps father's house; *Sp.*; *Bap.*; *Cons.*; 98.
SKINNER, MOSES: Age 47; Daniel's nephew; *M.* Esther Wilders; *Bap.*; *Lib.*; Small holder under Earl; 23, 98, 121, 183.
SKINNER FAMILY, THE: 98.
SMART, ABRAHAM: Age 29; Potato and straw and corn dealer; *B.*; *Wes.*; *Lib.*; 40, 122, 146, 159.
SMITHSON, HILDA: Age 68; Piggy's sister; keeps house for him; *Sp.*; *Wes.*; *Cons.*; 156, 173.
SMITHSON, JANE: Age 20; Piggy's daughter; *Sp.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 20, 21, 45, 74, 80, 87, 110, 127, 130, 144, 146, 151, 156, 173, 175, 185.
SMITHSON, JOHN: *D.*; Piggy's father; Farm labourer; 21.
SMITHSON, PIGGY (JOSEPH): Age 64; Large farmer and pig-breeder; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Farmer Strawson's widow; 2, 20, 21, 42, 60, 74, 99, 127, 144, 146, 156, 162, 173, 184.

SMITHSON, MRS J.: *D.*; *Née* Bowser; First husband Farmer Strawson; 21, 156.
SMITHSON, MALACHI: Age 61; Labourer for his brother Piggy Smithson; *P.M.*; *Lib.*; *M.* Naomi Jackson; 20, 162.
SMITHSON, NAOMI: Age 57; *Née* Jackson *M.* Malachi; *P.M.*; *Lib.*; 156, 162.
SNEATH, ABEL: Age 65; semi-bankrupt retired farmer; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Martha Dring; keeps china and glass and sweet shop; 78, 126, 142, 166.
SNEATH, MRS A. (MARTHA): Age 47; *Née* Dring; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 78.
SNEATH, OLD AMOS: *D.*; Abel's father; was well-to-do farmer in Fletton; 142.
SOUTH THOMSON, 'OLD': *D.*; Bankrupt farmer; 54, 56.
SOUTH, THOMSON, 'YOUNG': emigrated when father went bankrupt; took over one of Esau Burrow's businesses in U.S.A.; 45, 54.
STENNETT, NEHEMIAH: Age 29; Barber and tobacconist; *Wes.*; *Lib.*; *M.* Sarah Overton; 12,30, 82, 85, 123, 162.
STENNETT, MRS N.: Age 33; *Née* Overton; *Wes.*; *Cons.*; 12.
STOWER, ADAM: *D.*; Farm labourer; *M.* H. Enderby; father of Lynn, Tommy, etc.; 50.
STOWER, FRANK: Age 7; Tommy's son; 50.
STOWER, LYNN: Age 45; Landlord Mill Inn and market gardener; no religion; *Lab.*; *M.* Mag. Hodgson; 132, 164, 172.
STOWER, MRS L.: Age 26; *Née* Hodgson; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 132.
STOWER, ROBERT: Age 42; At the war; *M.* Esther Robinson; 38.
STOWER, TOMMY: Age 36; Farmer and auctioneer, hay, straw, horse, cattle, and corn dealer; Parish Councillor; *Wes.*; *Lib.*; *M.* Sarah Rowett; 5, 6, 25, 33, 36, 42, 50, 54, 67, 74, 84, 99, 107, 112, 123, 172, 175, 181.
STOWER, MRS T.: Age 34; *Née* Rowett; *Wes.*; *Lib.*; 33, 50, 67, 100.
STOWER FAMILY, THE: 166.
STRAWSON, FARMER: *D.*; Piggy Smithson married his widow; 21.
SWIFT, ADOLPHUS: Age 27; Valet to Viscount; *B.*; no religion; Anarchist; illegitimate son of Earl by Martha King; 24, 27, 32, 66, 68, 69, 115, 124, 126.
SWIFT, MR: a man; whereabouts and proper name known only to James Hanbury; acted as agent for the Earl in Martha King's case; 27.

SWINTON, ISAIAH: Age 48; Small-holder under County Council; *Cons.*; *Ch.*; *M.* S. Barley; 139, 189.
SWINTON, JOSIAH: Age 52; Blacksmith; *P.M.*; *Lib.*; *M.* Julia Stower; 14, 43, 48, 72, 83, 149, 159, 166, 172, 175, 179, 189.
SWINTON, MRS J.: Age 42; *Née* Stower; *P.M.*; *Cons.*; 166.
SWINTON, LEVI: Age 36; *M.* J. Petchell; on active service; 24, 38, 189.
SWINTON, 'OLD' RICHARD: *D.*; father of Josiah, Isaiah, etc.; *M.* A. Stennett; 189.

TAYLOR, JOHN: *See* BLIND JOHNNY.
THARP, 'OLD' AARON: *D.*; successful hay merchant; *M.* N. Price, a Welsh servant-girl; 23, 33, 50, 54, 103.
THARP, MRS A.: *D.*; Old Aaron's wife; *Née* Price; 33.
THARP, 'YOUNG' AARON: Age 29; *B.*; Socialist; no religion; bankrupt hay merchant; whereabouts unknown; 23, 33, 42, 45, 49, 50, 54, 67, 73, 77, 85, 103, 112, 122, 135, 179.
THARP, ALBERT: *D.*; Old Aaron's brother; *M.* M. Broomfield and went to Bly; 103.
THARP, ALBERT, GRANDFATHER: *D.*; father to Old Aaron and Albert; *M.* F. Dorrien; 98.
THARP, GRANDMOTHER: *Née* Dorrien (a French girl); ran away from Fletton and subsequent history unknown; 98, 103, 169.
THARP FAMILY, THE: 98.
THOMSON, IRVING, DR: *D.*; Joseph's father; was doctor in Fletton for nearly 50 years; 46.
THOMSON, JOSEPH: Age 57; Egg and fowl dealer and carrier; no religion; Socialist; *M.* Cissy Wilders; 42, 46, 84, 90, 106, 117.
TODD, 'DAME': *D.*; Peter's aunt; kept a school in Fletton; 54.
TODD, DAVID: Age 27; Farmer; Peter's son; *M.* a lawyer's daughter from Bly (Jessica White); *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 15, 37, 74, 99, 127, 177.
TODD, MRS D.: Age 34; David's wife; *Née* Jessica White; 177.
TODD, GEORGE: Age 23; Farmer; *B.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; Peter's son; semi-engaged to Eliza Dobney; 37, 61, 74, 79, 99, 110, 123, 127, 145, 150, 156, 173, 174, 177.
TODD, PETER: Age 63; Large farmer and District Councillor; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Jessie Key; 6, 9, 16, 42, 61, 74, 99, 110, 112, 127, 150, 159, 163, 177, 181.
TODD FAMILY, THE: 21, 99, 164, 184.
TOULSON, ADA: *See* MRS DAVID WADDY.

TOULSON, ANN : *See* MRS ADAM SHARPLES.
TOULSON, JAMES : Age 60; Small builder; Off licence holder and blacksmith and carpenter; Parish Councillor; *Bap.*; *Lib.*; *M.* Dorothy Stower; 7, 73, 98, 147, 166, 172, 179.
TOULSON, JOE : Age 41; on active service; *M.* N. Munks; 38.
TOWNSEND, ARCHIBALD : Age 44; Agricultural seed and corn merchant; no religion; *Lib.*; *M.* Enid Todd; 2, 5, 46, 99, 112, 121, 149, 159, 181, 185.
TOWNSEND, MRS A. : Age 28; *Née* Enid Todd; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 112, 159.
TOWNSEND, HAMILCAR : Age 12; Archibald's son; attends the Church School; 100, 159, 178.
TOWNSEND, IRA : *D.*; Archibald's father; founded the business; shot himself; 149.
TOYNBEE, JABEZ : *D.*; Joseph's father; 9.
TOYNBEE, JOSEPH : Age 38; on active service; *P.M.*; *Lib.*; *M.* Mabel Dring; employed before war by Isaiah Swinton; 38, 139.
TOYNBEE, MRS JOSEPH : Age 40; *Née* Dring; *P.M.*; *Lab* ; fourteen children, all living; 42, 139.
TUNNY, SIR EDMUND, BT. : of Churt Park; Landowner; 157.
TYRELL, REV. ERASMUS : Baptist minister from Bly; 38, 97, 150.

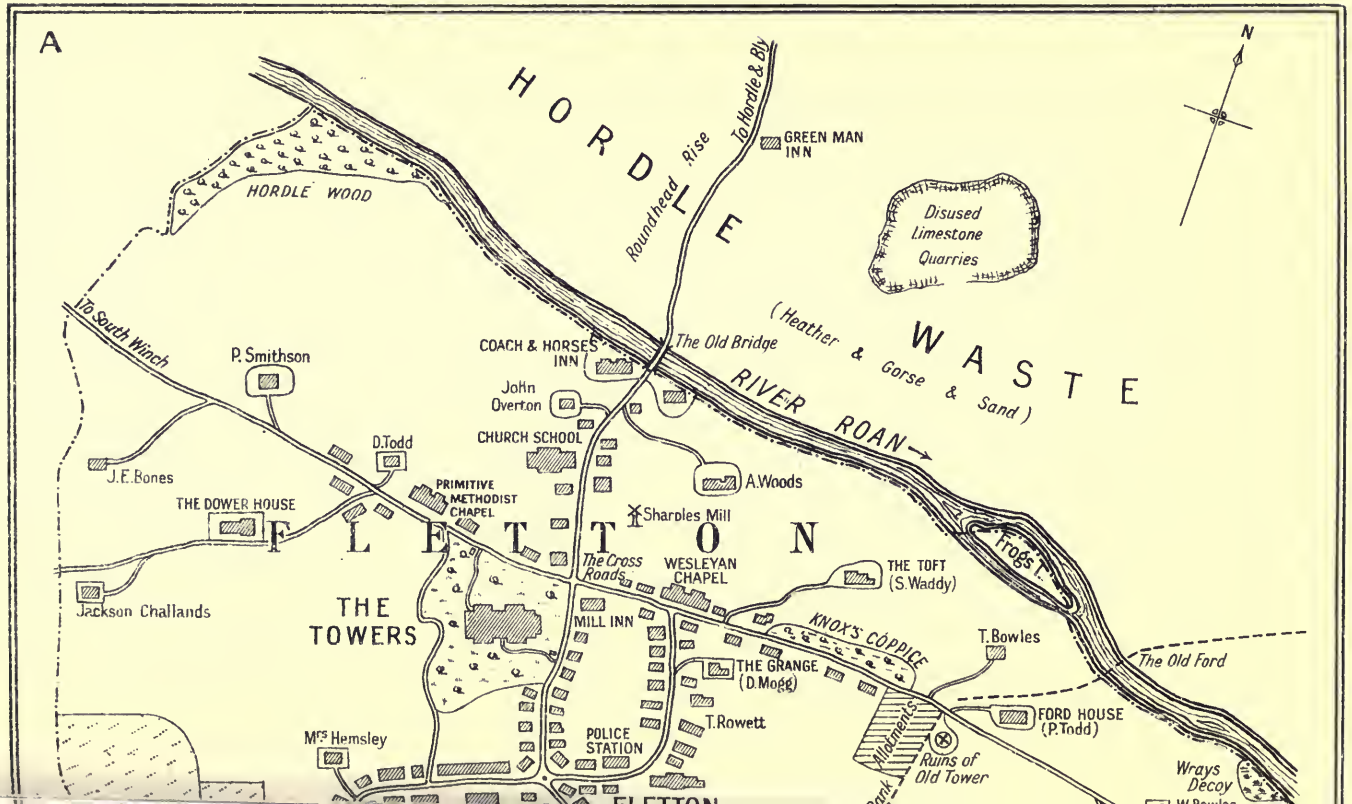
VICAR, THE (THE REV OSMOND LORNE, M.A.) : Age 63; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Janet Martin ; appointed 1898; 2, 3, 6, 11, 14, 23, 33, 42, 43, 64, 65, 69, 75, 81, 83, 86, 94, 100, 103, 104, 105, 107, 108, 110, 120, 126, 129, 133, 135, 139, 140, 145, 153, 165, 171, 175, 179, 188, 189.
VICAR, THE LATE (THE REV. J. K. MANTON) : *D.*; 65, 129.
VISCOUNT, THE (COLVILLE): Age 20; Earl's eldest son; *B.*; no religion; Communist; invalided from war; 1, 22, 27, 32, 38, 45, 51, 93, 115, 120, 124, 136, 157, 176, 180, 191.

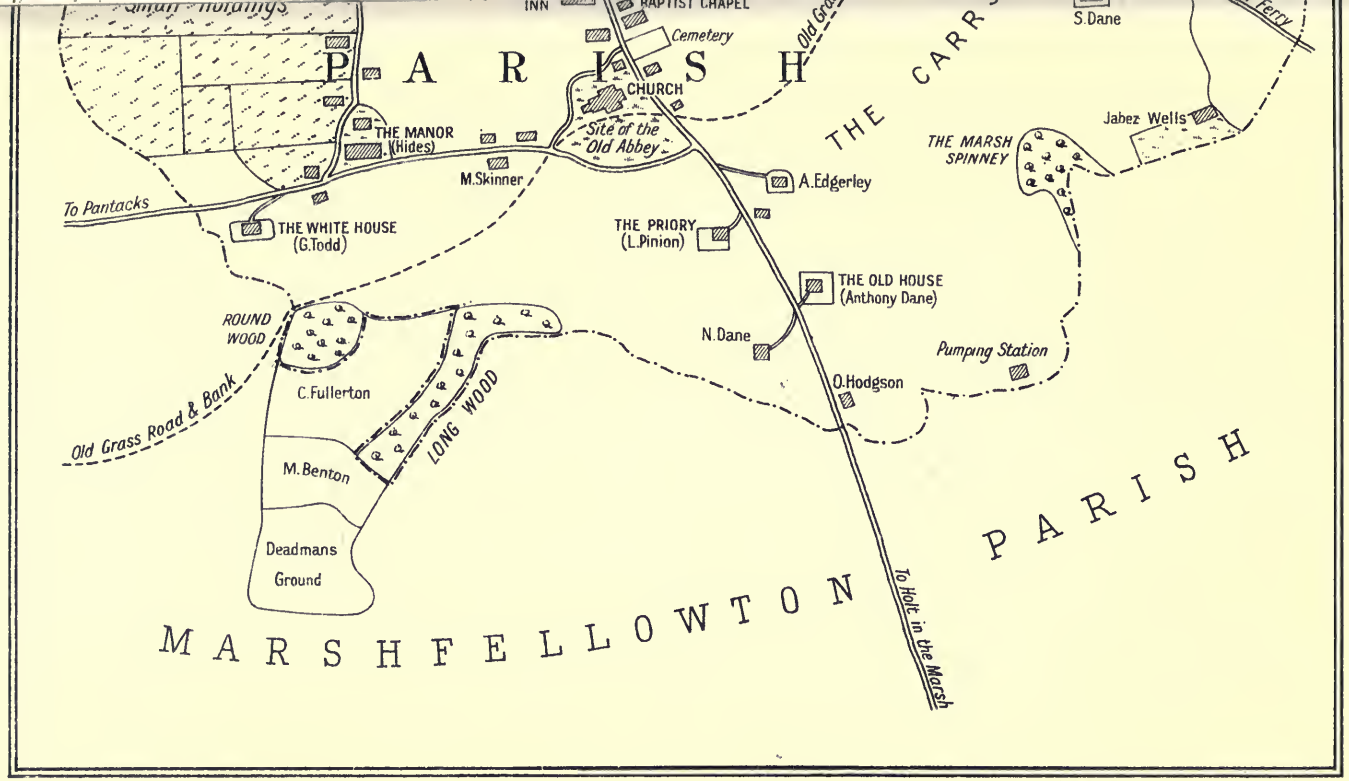
WADDY, DAVID (GREAT GRANDFATHER) : *D.*; a Waterloo veteran; 26.
WADDY, DAVID : Age 47; in Australia; *M.* Ada Toulson; Oliver's father; 8, 70, 166.
WADDY, MRS D. : Age 50; *Née* Toulson; Followed David to Australia; 166.
WADDY, JOB : *D.*; Samuel's brother; Farmer; *M.* Mildred Todd; 151.
WADDY, MRS JOB : *D.*; *Née* Todd; Ellen Dobney's mother; 151.

WADDY, JONATHAN (GRANDFATHER): Age 92; old age pensioner; *M.* S. Taylor; *W.*; atheist; *Lab.*; 8, 26, 42, 70, 89, 118.
WADDY, OLIVER (AUSTRALIAN): Age 24; soldier on leave; *B.*; no religion; *Lab.*; David's son; 8, 12, 16, 26, 30, 70, 80, 89, 98, 151, 164, 166, 184.
WADDY, SAMUEL: Age 53; Large farmer; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Marion Bowles; 26, 62, 70, 123, 151, 190.
WADDY, MRS S.: Age 40; *Née* Bowles; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 26, 58, 62, 70, 97, 123, 148, 151, 160, 164, 190.
WADDY, WILLIAM, 'UNCLE': *D.*; Great-grandfather David's brother; a Waterloo veteran; 26.
WADDY FAMILY, THE: 70, 164.
WALKER, DR: Doctor at Bly; 138.
WALKER, MRS: Dr Walker's wife; 138.
WALTON, LAWYER: a Bly solicitor; *Lib.*; 170.
WARDLE, ARBUTHNOT, M.P.: Age 47; Barrister and Conservative member for Fletton Parliamentary Constituency; lives at Thorpe-Tilney Croft; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Earl's niece; 6, 38, 55, 116, 118, 120, 126, 128, 167, 182, 189.
WATSON, FARMER: *D.*; Farmer on estate; 79.
WATSON, MRS: *D.*; Farmer Watson's widow, who was going to be baptised but died first; 90.
WELLS, EDWARD: Age 29; son of Jabez; on active service; *M.* K. Brown of Low Barnet; 38, 43.
WELLS, GEORGE; Age 31; son of Jabez; *Wes.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Lydia Skinner; works for father; 43.
WELLS, MRS G.: Age 30; *Née* Skinner; Daniel's daughter; 43.
WELLS, HILTON: Age 46; Jabez's brother; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; Landlord of Ship Inn; butcher and milk dealer; *M.* Bertha Oldfield; captain of the (manual) fire engine; 104, 106, 175, 190.
WELLS, MRS H.: *Née* Oldfield; 190.
WELLS, JABEZ: Age 52; Small farmer; *Wes.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Rebecca Jorkins; 38, 43, 97, 188, 190.
WELLS, MRS J.: Age 46; *Née* Jorkins; *Wes.*; *Lib.*; 188, 190.
WELLS, LIZZIE: Age 14; Servant-maid at Thompson Rowett's; Jabez's youngest daughter; 122.
WELLS, REUBEN: Age 50; *Wes.*; *Lab.*; *M.* G. Ambrose; Farm-worker at Hemsleys; 190.
WELLS, MRS R.; *Née* Ambrose; 190.
WELLS, SUSAN: Age 22; lives at home; *Sp.*; *Wes.*; *Cons.*; Jabez's eldest daughter; 43.
WHITE, LAWYER: of Bly; David Todd's father-in-law; 177.

WILDERS, BEN : Age 40; Gardener at Towers; *M.* H. Hemsley *Cons.*; *Ch.*; 24.
WILDERS, JOE : Age 34; Gardener at Towers; *M.* Muriel Goose; *Cons.*; *Ch.*; 24.
WILDERS, MARY : Age 37; Organist at church; *Sp.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; lives with mother and runs haberdashery and sweet shop; 58, 77, 100, 102, 129, 179.
WILLIAMSON, ADAH : Age 24; Maid at Towers; *Sp.*; *Ch.*; *Lib.*; Betty's daughter; Father unknown; 24, 30, 36, 83, 115, 124.
WILLIAMSON, BETTY : Age 67; 'Witch'; *Sp.*; no religion or politics; mother of Leah and Adah by different fathers; 36, 82, 83, 86, 103, 105, 124, 129, 140, 148, 159, 175, 188, 189.
WILLIAMSON, GRANDMOTHER (BLACK BESS) : *D.*; mother of Betty and Timothy; 83, 86.
WILLIAMSON, LEAH : Age 40; lives with Tom Bavin; *Sp.*; No religion; *Cons.*; Father unknown; Betty's daughter; 3, 36, 83, 86, 111, 124, 171.
WILLIAMSON, TIMOTHY : Age 66; Potato merchant and corn dealer; chemical manure agent and market gardener; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; *M.* Annie Woolerton; 7, 36, 142, 168.
WINCEY, GREAT-AUNT : *D.*; Great-aunt to the Viscount; 22, 32.
WINTER, MELCHIZEDEC : Age 64; Teacher of painting at Art School at Bly; 185.
WINTERBOURNE, ENOCH : Age 61; Trap hawker and small general shop; *P.M.*; *Lib.*; *M.* Keziah Swinton; 6, 20, 39, 48, 73, 100, 146, 161, 167, 189.
WINTERBOURNE, MRS E. : Age 55; *Née* Swinton; 189.
WOODS, ANTHONY : Age 58; Large farmer; Parish Councillor; *B.*; *Ch.*; *Cons.*; 56, 74, 80, 96, 165, 184.
WOOLERTON, HENRY : Age 47; General storekeeper; baker and grocer; Parish Councillor; *Wes.*; *Lib.*; *M.* Jane Ruston; 2, 20, 31, 42, 55, 125, 182.
WOOLERTON, JANE (MRS H.) : Age 48; *Née* Ruston; *Wes.*; *Lib.*; 20, 43, 51, 55, 96, 106, 129, 161, 182.
WOOLERTON, MOLLY : Age 9; Schoolgirl; Henry's daughter; 20, 50.
WOOLERTON, ROBIN : Age 13; Schoolboy; Henry's son; 20.
WOOLERTON, TOM : Age 34; on active service; *M.* L. Potterton; 38.
WOOLERTON FAMILY, THE : 61, 75.
WYNN, SIR WILLIAM : Davis Moggs's old landlord in Wales; 146.

A


HORDLE WASTE
(Heather & Gorse & Sand)
RIVER ROAN
Roundhead Rise
To Hordle & Bly
GREEN MAN INN
Disused Limestone Quarries
HORDLE WOOD
To South Winch
P. Smithson
COACH & HORSES INN
The Old Bridge
John Overton
CHURCH SCHOOL
D. Todd
J.E. Bones
PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL
A. Woods
THE DOWER HOUSE
Sharples Mill
FLETTON
The Cross Roads
WESLEYAN CHAPEL
THE TOFT (S. Waddy)
Frogs
Jackson Challands
THE TOWERS
MILL INN
KNOX'S COPPICE
T. Bowles
The Old Ford
THE GRANGE (D. Mogg)
FORD HOUSE (P. Todd)
T. Rowett
Mrs Hemsley
POLICE STATION
Allotments
Ruins of Old Tower
Wrays Decoy
N

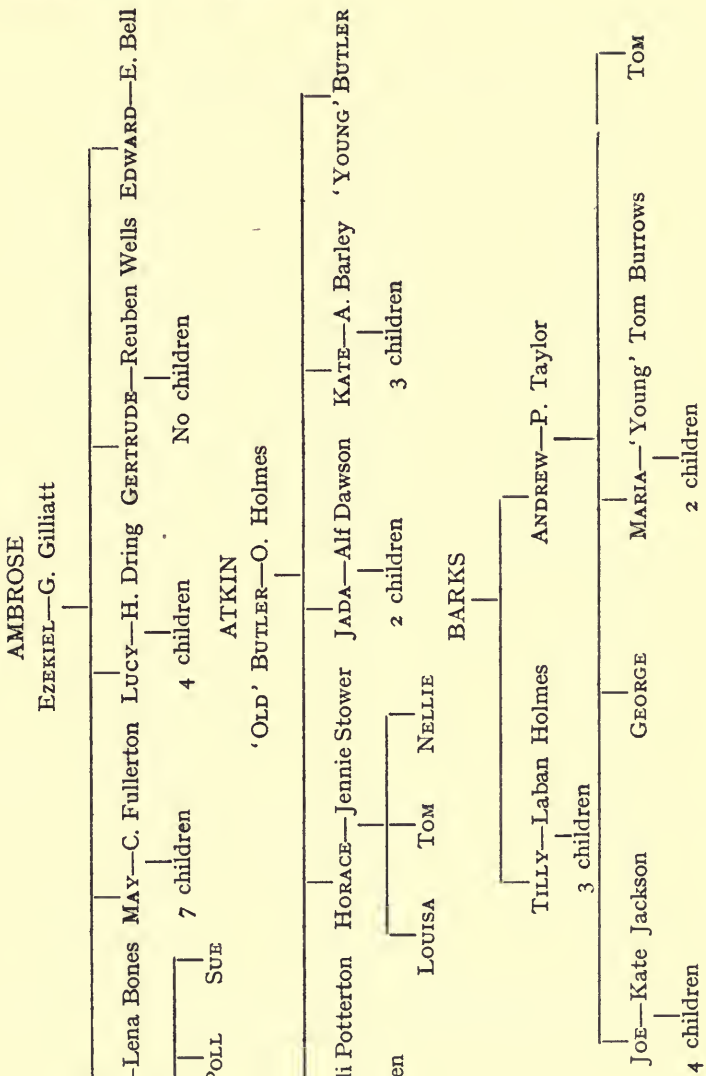


Collins' Geographical Establishment, Glasgow.

PRINCIPAL FAMILY TREES

Ambrose	Goose	Pinion
Atkin	Harker	Pratt
Barks	Harrod	Rowett
Barley	Hemsley	Ruston
Bavin	Hides	Sharples
Bones	Hodgson	Skinner
Bowles	Holmes	Smithson
Burrows	Jackson	Stower
Challands	Jenkins	Swinton
Cook	Jorkins	Tharp
Coote	Key	Todd
Creasey	King	Toulson
Cutts	Lowe	Waddy
Dane	Makins	Wells
Dobney	Maplethorpe	Wilders
Dodds	Oldfield	Williamson
Dring	Overton	Woolerton

(*Note.*—The numbers of children given refer to those born, whether dead or alive at present time.)


AMBROSE
Ezekiel—G. Gilliatt
Newton—Lena Bones
May—C. Fullerton
Lucy—H. Dring
Gertrude—Reuben Wells
Edward—E. Bell
Meg
Poll
Sue
7 children
4 children
No children
ATKIN
'Old' Butler—O. Holmes
Julia—Eli Potterton
Horace—Jennie Stower
Jada—Alf Dawson
Kate—A. Barley
'Young' Butler
5 children
Louisa
Tom
Nellie
2 children
3 children
BARKS
Tilly—Laban Holmes
Andrew—P. Taylor
3 children
Joe—Kate Jackson
George
Maria—'Young' Tom Burrows
Tom
4 children
2 children

BARLEY

- ALEXANDER—K. Atkin
  - 3 children
- OLIVER—Nan Pratt
  - 8 children
- SELINA—I. Swinton
  - 7 children

BAVIN

OLD THOMAS—Mary Martin

- TOM—Lives with Leah Williamson
  - 8 children
- NICHOL—Mary Ruston
  - 3 children
- WILL

BONES

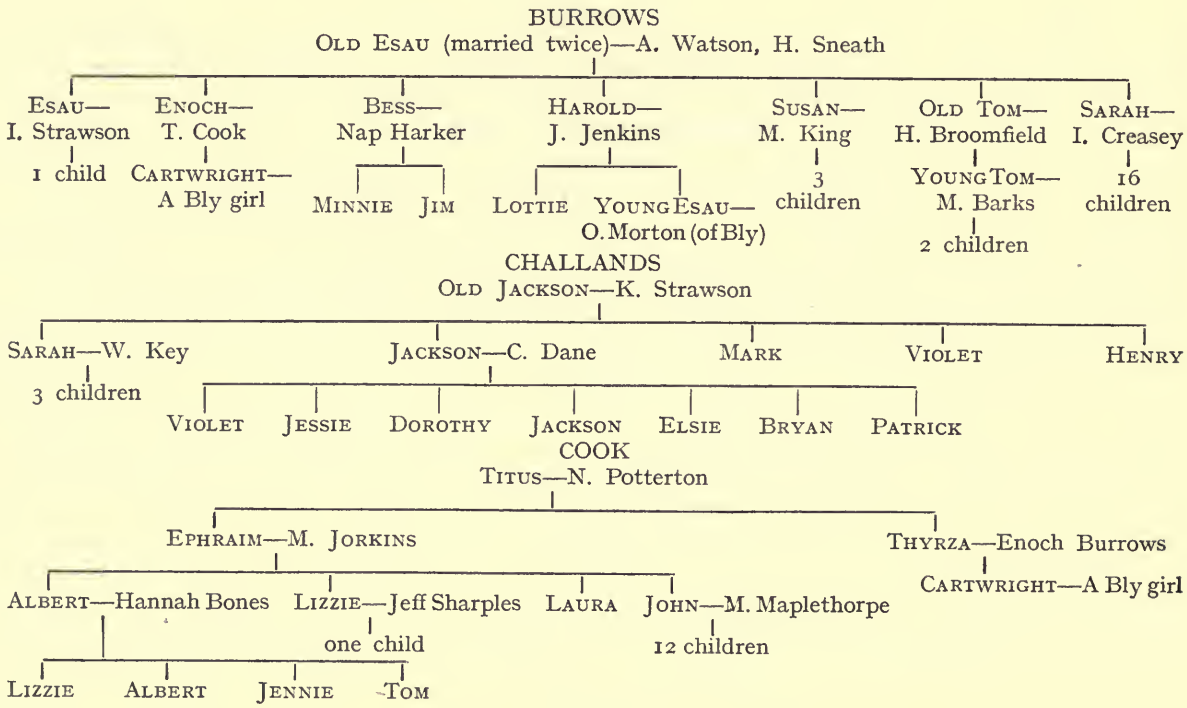
WILLIAM—Matilda Taylor

- EMILY—J. Creasey
  - 9 children
- JAMES
- EDWARD—W. Sharples
  - TILLY
  - LIZZIE
  - 4 BABIES
- LENA—N. Ambrose
  - 3 children
- HANNAH—A. Cook
  - 4 children
- CHRISTIAN—T. Wattam (of Holt)

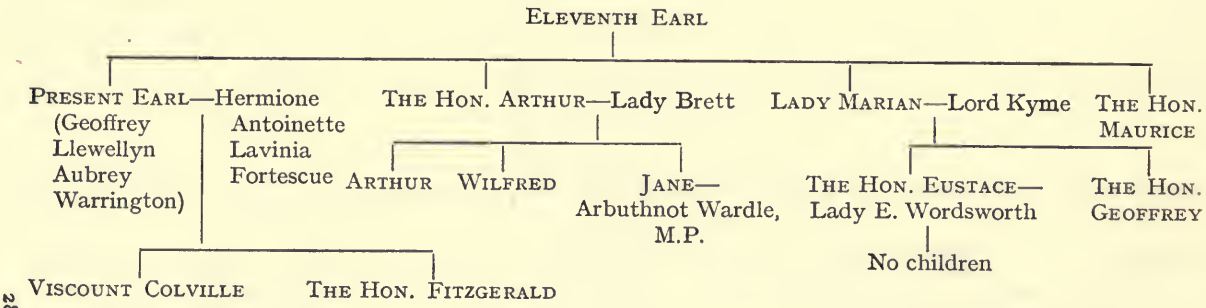
BOWLES

CHARLES—Henrietta Marshall

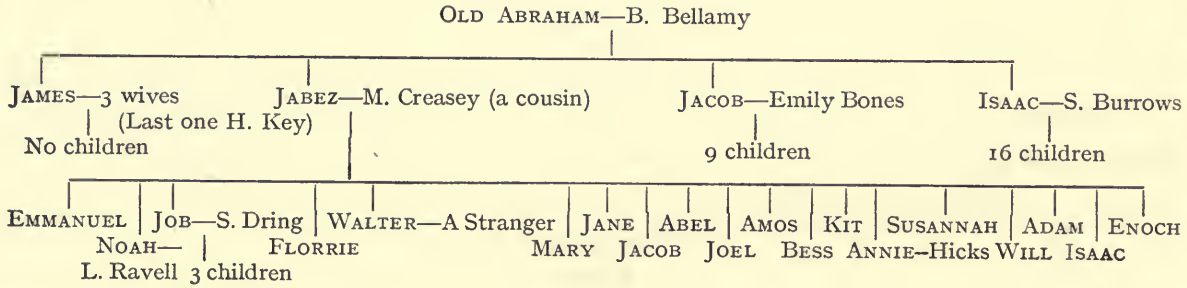
- WILLIAM—Jemima Hodgson
  - 2 children
- THOMAS—Hepzibah Key (Creasey)
  - No children
- MARION—S. Waddy
  - 1 child

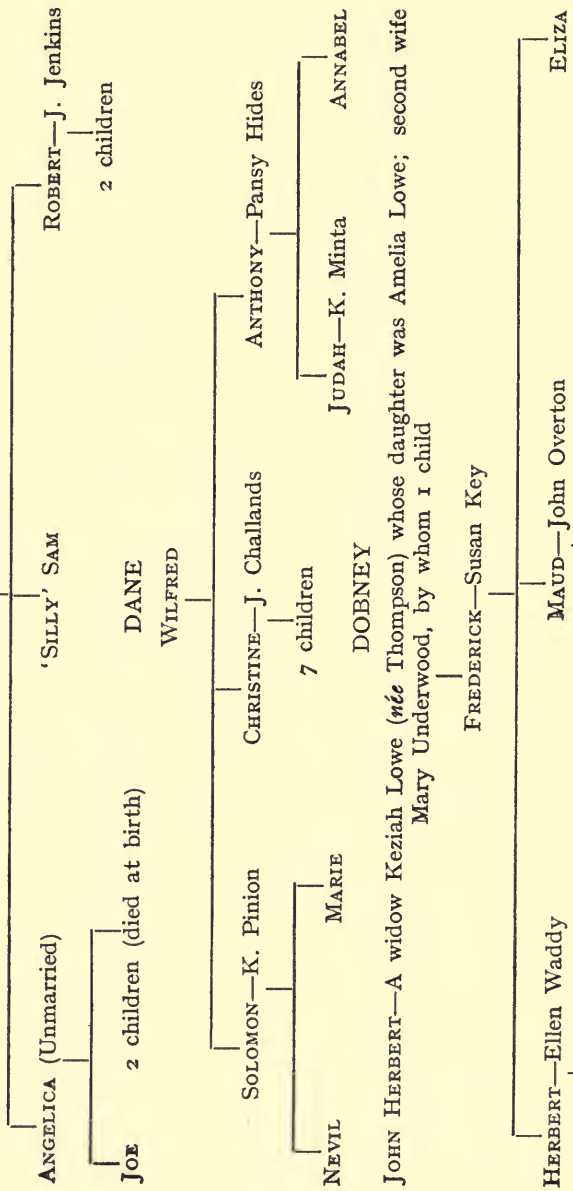

BURROWS
Old Esau (married twice)—A. Watson, H. Sneath
Esau—I. Strawson
1 child
Enoch—T. Cook
Cartwright—A Bly girl
Bess—Nap Harker
Minnie
Jim
Harold—J. Jenkins
Lottie
Young Esau—O. Morton (of Bly)
Susan—M. King
3 children
Old Tom—H. Broomfield
Young Tom—M. Barks
2 children
Sarah—I. Creasey
16 children
CHALLANDS
Old Jackson—K. Strawson
Sarah—W. Key
3 children
Jackson—C. Dane
Violet
Jessie
Dorothy
Jackson
Elsie
Bryan
Patrick
Mark
Violet
Henry
COOK
Titus—N. Potterton
Ephraim—M. Jorkins
Albert—Hannah Bones
Lizzie
Albert
Jennie
Tom
Lizzie—Jeff Sharples
one child
Laura
John—M. Maplethorpe
12 children
Thyrza—Enoch Burrows
Cartwright—A Bly girl

COOTE



CREASEY




CUTTS
Ada—(Unmarried)
Angelica (Unmarried)
Joe
2 children (died at birth)
'Silly' Sam
Robert—J. Jenkins
2 children
Dane
Wilfred
Solomon—K. Pinion
Nevil
Marie
Christine—J. Challands
7 children
Dobney
Anthony—Pansy Hides
Judah—K. Minta
Annabel
John Herbert—A widow Keziah Lowe (née Thompson) whose daughter was Amelia Lowe; second wife
Mary Underwood, by whom 1 child
Frederick—Susan Key
Herbert—Ellen Waddy
No children
Maud—John Overton
1 child
Eliza

DODDS

NATHANIEL—Mary Ann Jackson

- ROBERT—Eliza Stower
  - JIMMY and 9 others
- JAEL—Arthur Holmes
  - 7 children
- NANCY—Amos Pratt
  - 11 children

DRING

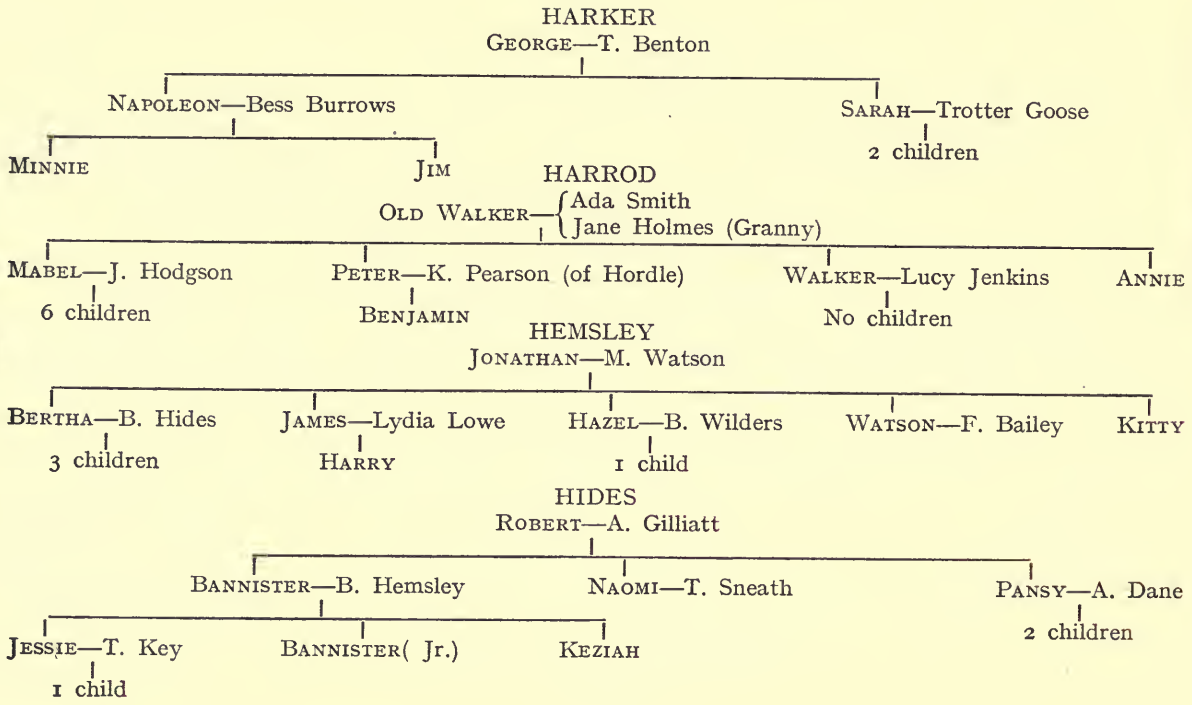
HANNIBAL—D. Bean

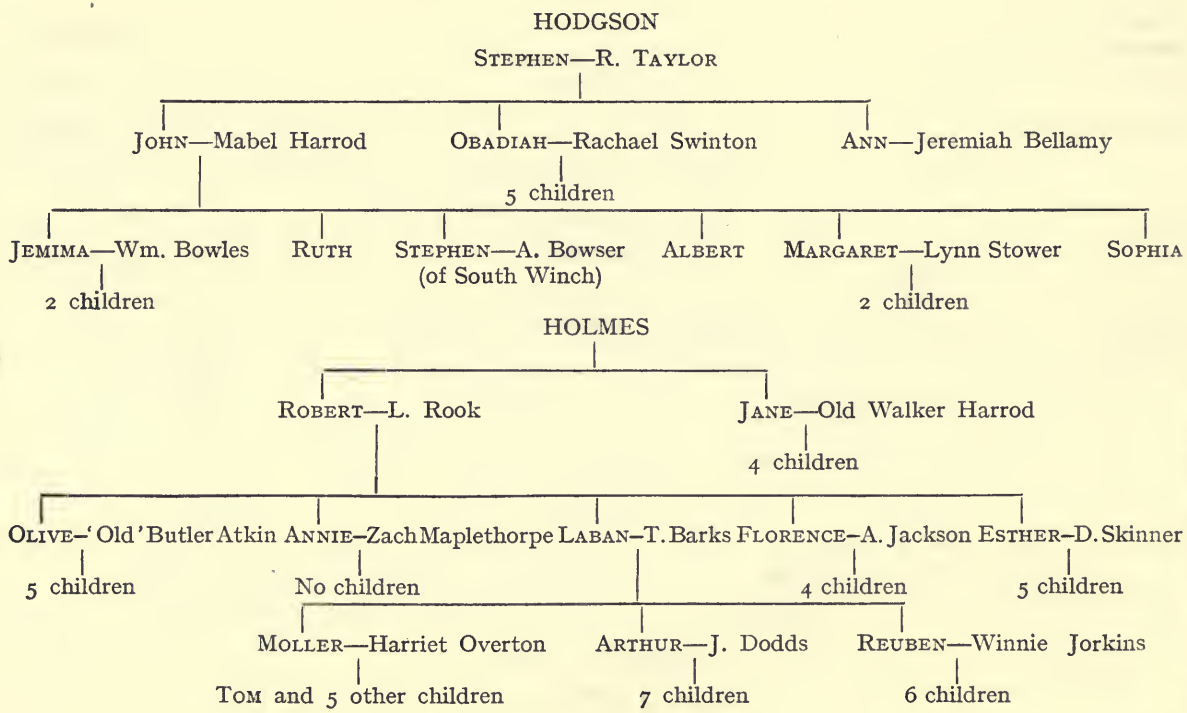
- HAMILTON—Lucy Ambrose
  - 4 children
- MARTHA—Abel Sneath
  - No family
- MABEL—Joe Toynbee
  - 14 children
- SUSAN—Job Creasey
  - 3 children

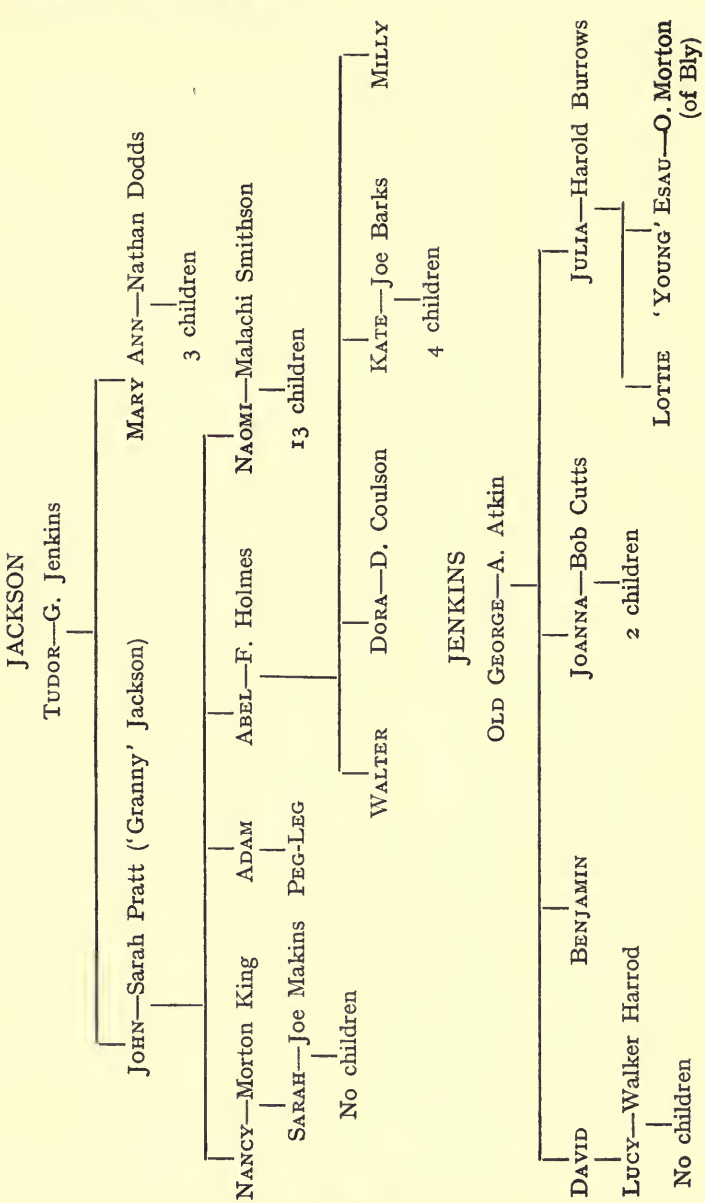
GOOSE

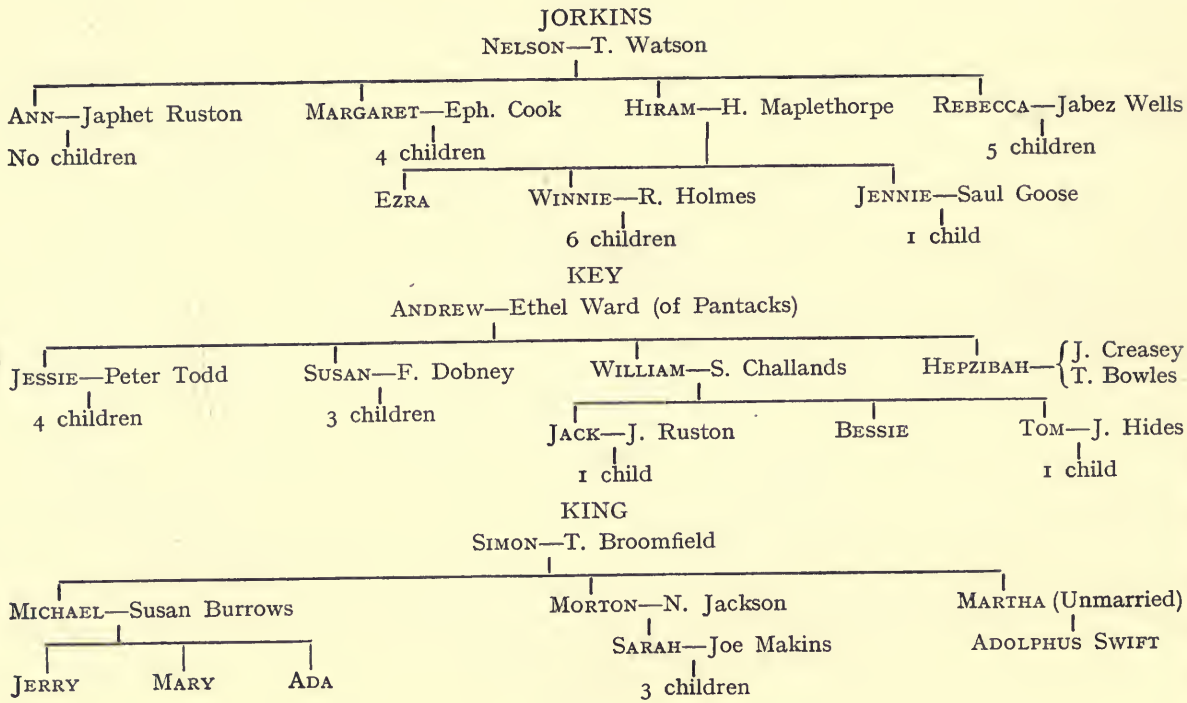
JOHN JOSEPH—T. Bembridge (of Hordle)

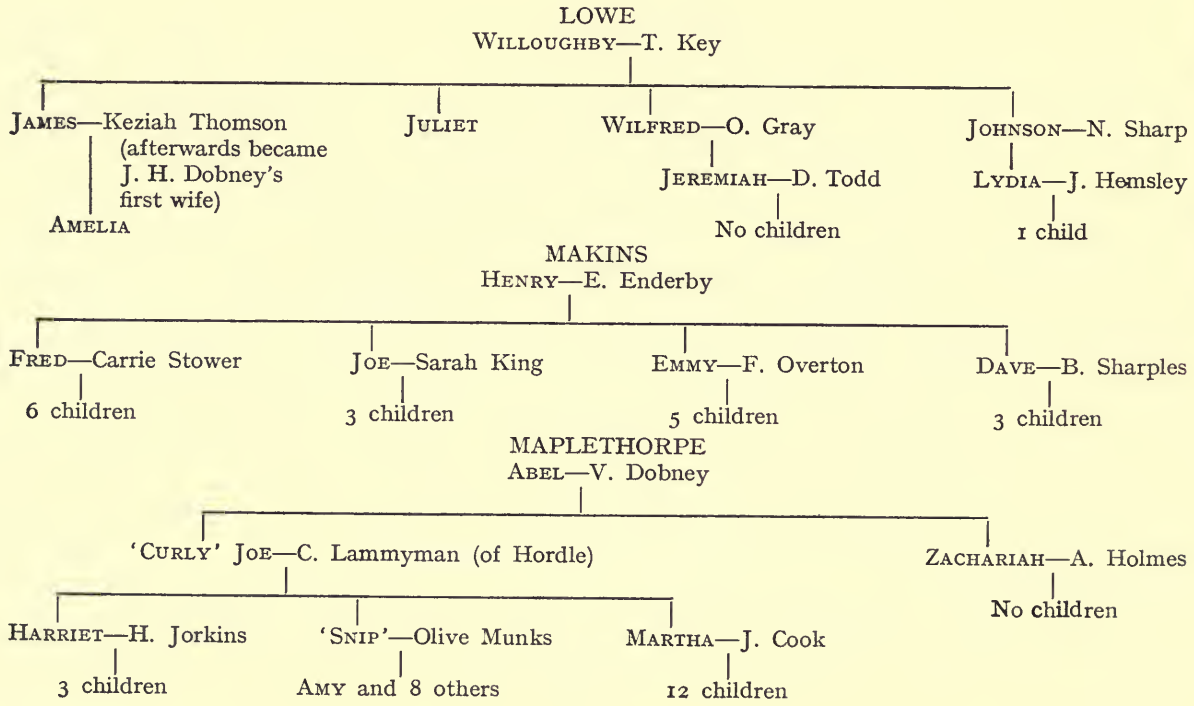
- 'COBBLER' GEORGE—Harriet Stower
  - 5 children
- TROTTER—Sarah Harker
  - MURIEL—J. Wilders
    - 1 child
  - SAUL—J. Jorkins
    - 1 child


HARKER
George—T. Benton
Napoleon—Bess Burrows
Sarah—Trotter Goose
2 children
Minnie
Jim
HARROD
Old Walker—{Ada Smith / Jane Holmes (Granny)
Mabel—J. Hodgson
6 children
Peter—K. Pearson (of Hordle)
Benjamin
Walker—Lucy Jenkins
No children
Annie
HEMSLEY
Jonathan—M. Watson
Bertha—B. Hides
3 children
James—Lydia Lowe
Harry
Hazel—B. Wilders
1 child
Watson—F. Bailey
Kitty
HIDES
Robert—A. Gilliatt
Bannister—B. Hemsley
Naomi—T. Sneath
Pansy—A. Dane
2 children
Jessie—T. Key
1 child
Bannister(Jr.)
Keziah


HODGSON
STEPHEN—R. TAYLOR
JOHN—Mabel Harrod
OBADIAH—Rachael Swinton
ANN—Jeremiah Bellamy
5 children
JEMIMA—Wm. Bowles
RUTH
STEPHEN—A. Bowser (of South Winch)
ALBERT
MARGARET—Lynn Stower
SOPHIA
2 children
2 children
HOLMES
ROBERT—L. Rook
JANE—Old Walker Harrod
4 children
OLIVE—'Old' Butler Atkin
ANNIE—Zach Maplethorpe
LABAN—T. Barks
FLORENCE—A. Jackson
ESTHER—D. Skinner
5 children
No children
4 children
5 children
MOLLER—Harriet Overton
ARTHUR—J. Dodds
REUBEN—Winnie Jorkins
TOM and 5 other children
7 children
6 children


JACKSON
Tudor—G. Jenkins
John—Sarah Pratt ('Granny' Jackson)
Mary Ann—Nathan Dodds
3 children
Nancy—Morton King
Adam
Abel—F. Holmes
Naomi—Malachi Smithson
13 children
Sarah—Joe Makins
Peg-Leg
No children
Walter
Dora—D. Coulson
Kate—Joe Barks
Milly
4 children
JENKINS
Old George—A. Atkin
David
Benjamin
Joanna—Bob Cutts
Julia—Harold Burrows
Lucy—Walker Harrod
No children
2 children
Lottie
'Young' Esau—O. Morton
(of Bly)


JORKINS
NELSON—T. Watson
ANN—Japhet Ruston
No children
MARGARET—Eph. Cook
4 children
HIRAM—H. Maplethorpe
EZRA
WINNIE—R. Holmes
6 children
JENNIE—Saul Goose
1 child
REBECCA—Jabez Wells
5 children
KEY
ANDREW—Ethel Ward (of Pantacks)
JESSIE—Peter Todd
4 children
SUSAN—F. Dobney
3 children
WILLIAM—S. Challands
JACK—J. Ruston
1 child
BESSIE
TOM—J. Hides
1 child
HEPZIBAH—J. Creasey
T. Bowles
KING
SIMON—T. Broomfield
MICHAEL—Susan Burrows
JERRY
MARY
ADA
MORTON—N. Jackson
SARAH—Joe Makins
3 children
MARTHA (Unmarried)
ADOLPHUS SWIFT


LOWE
WILLOUGHBY—T. Key
JAMES—Keziah Thomson (afterwards became J. H. Dobney's first wife)
AMELIA
JULIET
WILFRED—O. Gray
JEREMIAH—D. Todd
No children
JOHNSON—N. Sharp
LYDIA—J. Hemsley
1 child
MAKINS
HENRY—E. Enderby
FRED—Carrie Stower
6 children
JOE—Sarah King
3 children
EMMY—F. Overton
5 children
DAVE—B. Sharples
3 children
MAPLETHORPE
ABEL—V. Dobney
'CURLY' JOE—C. Lammyman (of Hordle)
HARRIET—H. Jorkins
3 children
'SNIP'—Olive Munks
AMY and 8 others
MARTHA—J. Cook
12 children
ZACHARIAH—A. Holmes
No children

OLDFIELD

HENRY—G. Fennington

- HUCKLEBURY—Amelia Rowett
  - MOLL—B. Overton
    - No children
  - 5 other children
- RUFUS
- BERTHA—H. Wells
  - 1 child

OVERTON

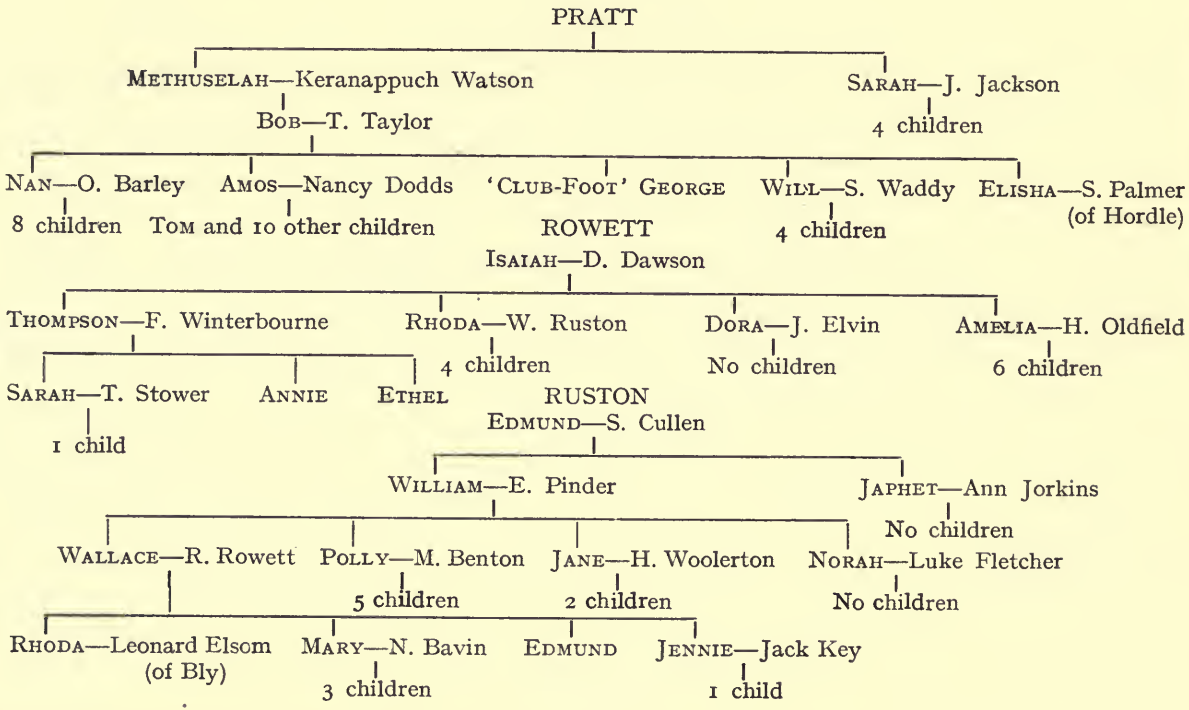
OLD JOHN—Amy Wade (of Holt)

- NANCE—Eli Gunn
  - 1 child
- FRED—E. Makins
  - 5 children
- BILL—M. Oldfield
  - No children
- HARRIET—M. Holmes
  - 6 children
- TILLY—J. Harvey
  - No children
- SARAH—N. Stennett
  - 1 child
- JOHN—M. Dobney
  - 1 child

PINION

CHARLES—Olivia Strawson

- KATHERINE—S. Dane
  - 2 children
- RONALD—Norah Widdowson (of Bly)
  - LAURIE—Mildred Bugg
- GILBERT


PRATT
METHUSELAH—Keranappuch Watson
SARAH—J. Jackson
BOB—T. Taylor
4 children
NAN—O. Barley
AMOS—Nancy Dodds
'CLUB-FOOT' GEORGE
WILL—S. Waddy
ELISHA—S. Palmer (of Hordle)
8 children
TOM and 10 other children
ROWETT
4 children
ISAIAH—D. Dawson
THOMPSON—F. Winterbourne
RHODA—W. Ruston
DORA—J. Elvin
AMELIA—H. Oldfield
4 children
No children
6 children
SARAH—T. Stower
ANNIE
ETHEL
RUSTON
1 child
EDMUND—S. Cullen
WILLIAM—E. Pinder
JAPHET—Ann Jorkins
No children
WALLACE—R. Rowett
POLLY—M. Benton
JANE—H. Woolerton
NORAH—Luke Fletcher
5 children
2 children
No children
RHODA—Leonard Elsom (of Bly)
MARY—N. Bavin
EDMUND
JENNIE—Jack Key
3 children
1 child

SHARPLES

ARTHUR—H. Coulson

- JEFF—Lizzie Cook
  - 1 child
- ADAM—Ann Toulson
  - 6 children
- WINNIE—J. E. Bones
  - 6 children
- BERTHA—D. Makins
  - 3 children

SKINNER

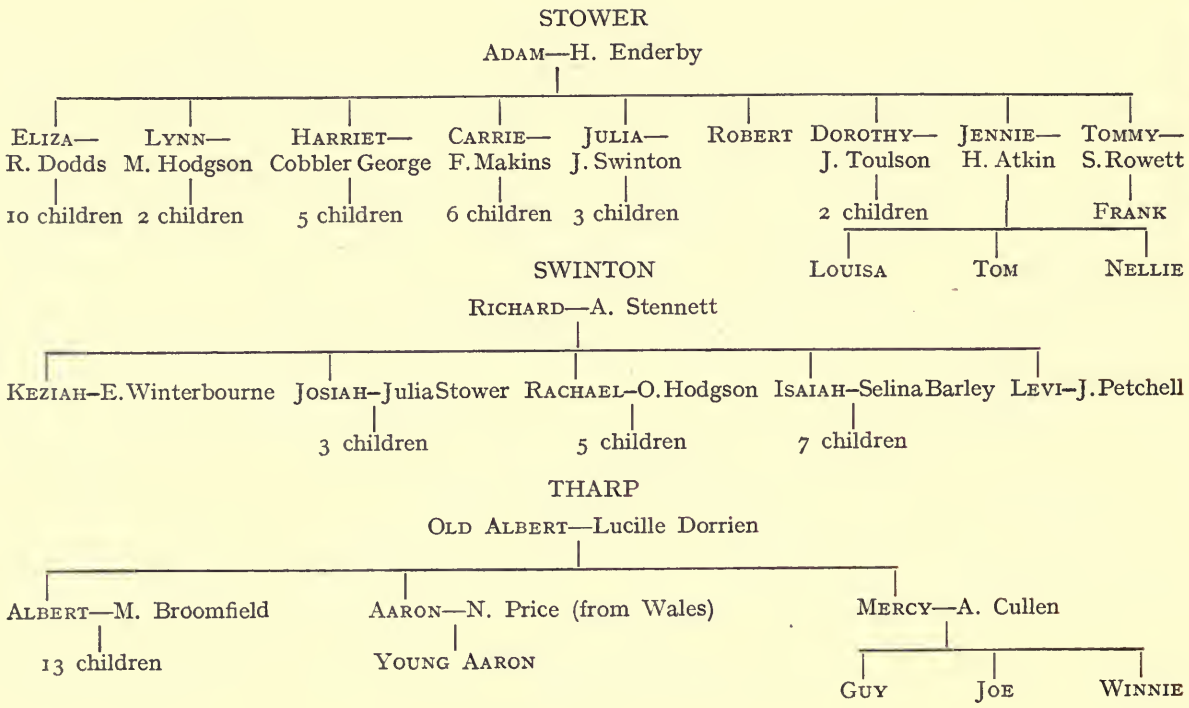
'OLD' DANIEL—W. Brooks

- DANIEL—E. Holmes
  - JOYCE
  - JOE
  - ALBERT
  - LITTLE DANIEL
  - LYDIA—G. Wells
    - 1 child
- BURTON
  - MOSES—E. Wilders
    - No children

SMITHSON

DAVID—C. Creasey

- DAVID
- JOHN—Mabel Winch
  - HILDA
  - DINAH—Morton Enderby
    - No family
  - PIGGY (Joseph)—Widow Strawson
    - JANE
  - MALACHI—Naomi Jackson
    - 13 children


STOWER
ADAM—H. Enderby
ELIZA—R. Dodds
10 children
LYNN—M. Hodgson
2 children
HARRIET—Cobbler George
5 children
CARRIE—F. Makins
6 children
JULIA—J. Swinton
3 children
ROBERT
DOROTHY—J. Toulson
2 children
JENNIE—H. Atkin
TOMMY—S. Rowett
FRANK
LOUISA
TOM
NELLIE
SWINTON
RICHARD—A. Stennett
KEZIAH—E. Winterbourne
JOSIAH—Julia Stower
3 children
RACHAEL—O. Hodgson
5 children
ISAIAH—Selina Barley
7 children
LEVI—J. Petchell
THARP
OLD ALBERT—Lucille Dorrien
ALBERT—M. Broomfield
13 children
AARON—N. Price (from Wales)
YOUNG AARON
MERCY—A. Cullen
GUY
JOE
WINNIE

TODD

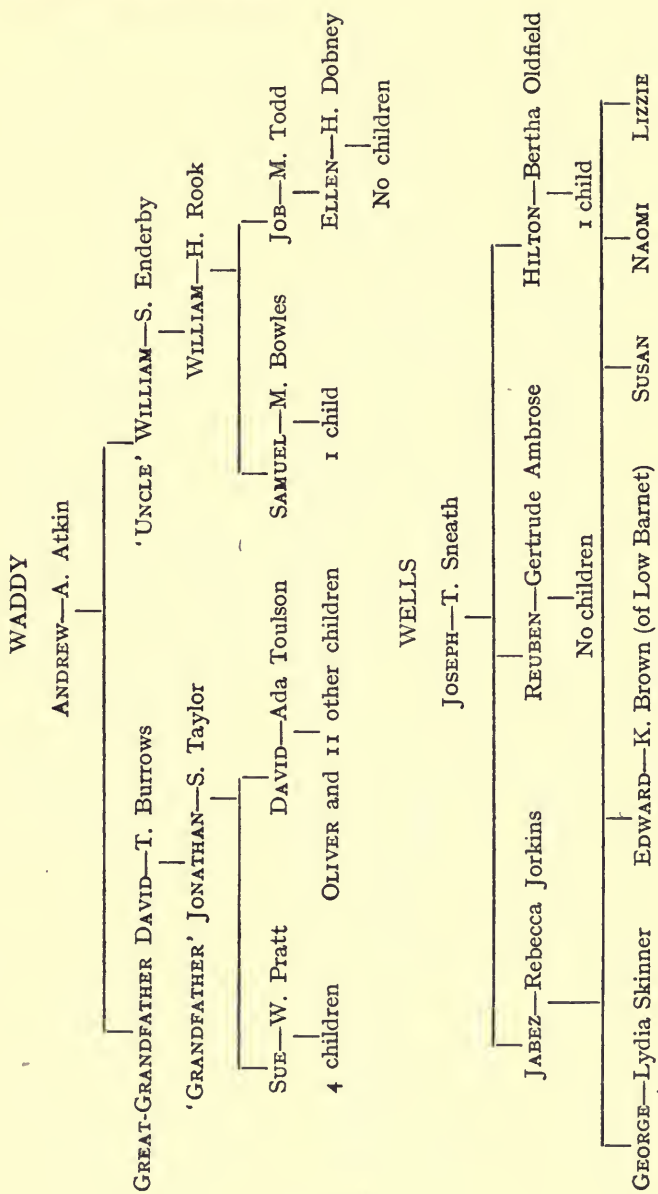
THOMAS—C. Strawson

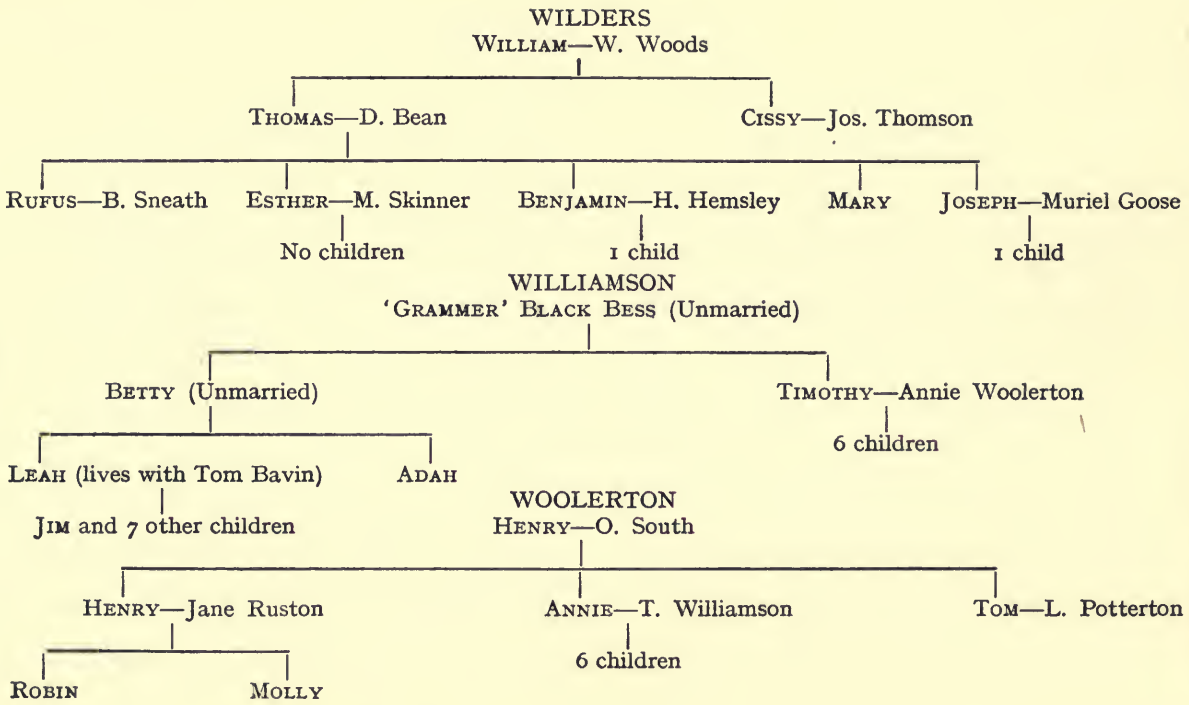
- JOHN—N. Gilliatt
  - DORIS—J. Lowe
    - No children
  - PETER—Jessie Key
    - ENID—A. Townsend
    - DAVID—Jessica White
    - HILDA
    - GEORGE
  - JOHN—H. Thomson
  - PAUL—D. Fullerton
  - MILDRED—J. Waddy
    - ELLEN—H. Dobney
      - No children
- 'OLD DAME' TODD

TOULSON

THOMAS—B. Gunn

- JAMES—D. Stower
  - 2 children
- ADA—D. Waddy
  - 12 children
- ANN—A. Sharples
  - 6 children
- JOE—N. Munks
  - No children


WADDY
Andrew—A. Atkin
Great-Grandfather David—T. Burrows
'Uncle' William—S. Enderby
William—H. Rook
'Grandfather' Jonathan—S. Taylor
Job—M. Todd
Ellen—H. Dobney
No children
Sue—W. Pratt
David—Ada Toulson
Samuel—M. Bowles
4 children
Oliver and 11 other children
1 child
WELLS
Joseph—T. Sneath
Hilton—Bertha Oldfield
1 child
Jabez—Rebecca Jorkins
Reuben—Gertrude Ambrose
No children
George—Lydia Skinner
Edward—K. Brown (of Low Barnet)
Susan
Naomi
Lizzie
1 child


WILDERS
William—W. Woods
Thomas—D. Bean
Cissy—Jos. Thomson
Rufus—B. Sneath
Esther—M. Skinner
No children
Benjamin—H. Hemsley
1 child
Mary
Joseph—Muriel Goose
1 child
WILLIAMSON
'Grammer' Black Bess (Unmarried)
Betty (Unmarried)
Timothy—Annie Woolerton
6 children
Leah (lives with Tom Bavin)
Jim and 7 other children
Adah
WOOLERTON
Henry—O. South
Henry—Jane Ruston
Robin
Molly
Annie—T. Williamson
6 children
Tom—L. Potterton

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